

2012 LENTEN FAST

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days He was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them He was hungry. —Luke 4:1-2

Wednesday, February 22 — Sunday, April 8, 2012

This year, the Lenten Period spans Wednesday, February 22, 2012 through Resurrection Sunday (Easter), April 8, 2012. The period of Lent commemorates the time that Jesus spent in the wilderness; immediately after His baptism, and just before He began His official ministry. Just as Jesus spent time in the wilderness fasting and praying, it is our custom to follow that example as we prepare to embark upon new levels of faith and continue the ministry that God has set before us. This is a time of self-examination and repentance.

As Christians, we fast and pray to strengthen our faith, increase spiritual discipline, release the power of God, and prepare us for even more fruitful ministry. It helps the believer to be more attentive to God and the things of God. It increases spiritual stamina and releases power in the lives of those who spend time in His presence. Thus, it is spiritually beneficial for the individual and for the Corporate Church to commit to this period of consecration; during which all of those who participate will strive to experience personal and spiritual cleansing and growth.

Read and Apply the Word

On a fast day...you shall read the words of the Lord. —Jeremiah 36:6

During this time of consecration, we should commit to increased study of the Word. We encourage all to consider attending Pastor's Bible Study on Wednesday nights, or any of the other Bible Studies offered. If you are already attending one of the Bible Studies, increase your personal time of study. Add Bible commentaries to your library and read books that will facilitate personal growth as they speak to particular spiritual needs or interests.

Pray Continually

I, Daniel...turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and supplications with fasting. Daniel 9:2-3

Prayer and fasting go hand in hand. We ask that you would make a commitment to pray at least three times daily or by simply increasing your personal prayer time. Please remember that Corporate Prayer is held every Saturday morning at 9 a.m. in the Sanctuary.

Obey and Overcome

Is not this the fast that I chose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Isaiah 58:6

Please note that fasting is valuable in the life of the Christian, it is more important that we obey the Word of God than to go without food. "Obedience is better than sacrifice." Let us all sincerely consider our behaviors, attitudes, relationships, etc.; and confess those areas of disobedience in our lives. Then let us commit to conforming to the will of God in every area of our lives. In 2012, our aim is to experience the abundance of God as never before!

To that end, we want to personally challenge everyone to tithe and give sacrificially. If you are not tithing, during this time of fasting, prayer, and reflection give prayerful consideration to the aforementioned.

Fast for a Breakthrough

"Then the Israelites, all the people, went up to Bethel, and there sat weeping before the Lord. They fasted that day until evening and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the Lord." — Judges 20:26

Fasting cleanses the body and spirit. Improper eating habits and diet are the cause of many ills. Fasting helps to rid the body of toxins and other types of waste materials. It should likewise prepare our hearts and minds to receive God's anointing and will for our lives. During this Lenten Period, we are calling the members of The Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral of New York to join together for a partial fast. Fasting helps to prepare our hearts to receive God's anointing and God's will for our lives. It is a means by which we worship the Lord and offer ourselves to Him in humility and love. In fasting, we are always striving to insure that God gets the glory in all that we do. Genuine faith and the desire to please

God is what God wants from every believer.

Fasting Breaks Yokes of Bondage! If you are challenged with an addiction (drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, pornography, food, etc.), this is the time that you should commit to fasting so that you can experience spiritual breakthrough! It is the time break free of anger, lack of forgiveness, bad attitudes and anything that breaks your connection with the power of the Almighty. “These come out through fasting and prayer...”

This is the Time to Eliminate Excessive Behavior!

If you are given to excess in certain areas (shopping, television, telephone, computer, etc.) seek to change negative habitual behaviors and patterns during this time of fasting and consecration. For example, it might be advantageous for one to refrain from watching television during certain hours and devote that time to prayer and study. We must be balanced and moderate in all things.

Fast Directives

Prayerfully **eliminate the following foods** from your diets:

- Fast foods, junk foods, and fried foods.
- All red meats, pork, and sea scavengers (shrimp, catfish, lobster, etc.) Poultry (chicken and turkey) is permissible, however, if you are serious about cleansing the body, you must remember that certain meats are fed “growth enhancers” that may not be good for the body.
- Foods and drinks with high sugar content (e.g. cakes, cookies, candy, pastries, custards, punches, etc.)
- All coffee and teas with caffeine, and soda.
- Please limit the consumption of milk, cheese, and other dairy products.

Please observe a **daily, 12-hour TOTAL fast** (*liquids only*), depending on your schedule; for instance, between the hours of **6 p.m. and 6 a.m.; 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.; or between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m.** This essentially means that you will have your last meal of the day in the evening and will not eat again until the following morning.

Special Fast Instructions

If you have never fasted before or question your physical ability to fast, please consult your physician. Please note: • In the first few days you may experience a headache, which is probably due to the cessation of the caffeine in tea, coffee and other products. • An unpleasant taste in the mouth, coated tongue, and bad breath are all a part of the cleansing process. Place (sugarless) breath mints or menthol crystals under the tongue when needed. • Be sure to drink plenty of water. This aids in the process of elimination by flushing the system.

It is recommended that all who are physically able maintain a schedule of regular exercise. Walking, aerobics, biking, etc. help regulate metabolism, and will prevent sluggishness and rapid weight gain after the fast is over. Should you absentmindedly or intentionally violate the fast by eating what you have vowed not to eat, or eating at a time that you have vowed not to eat, you may repent and return to the fast, remaking your vow before the Lord.

Breaking the Fast

We will break our fast on Resurrection Sunday Morning with gratitude, rejoicing, and praise. We will not only celebrate the Resurrection of the risen Lord, we will give God the glory for the increased power that will be ours. After a season of repenting, praying, studying and yielding to the will of the Lord, we are sure to witness a marvelous move of God in our midst.

Remember, after you break your fast, you should probably gradually resume a “normal diet,” should you choose to do so. Spiritually, it should not be business as usual. You should be more liberated to walk in the Spirit, more committed to the Lord, and more energized for service in the Kingdom.