

Diocesan Day of Prayer & Fasting: Guidelines on Fasting

Thursday, March 26, 2020



There is great blessing and power in unified prayer. Throughout the centuries, God's people have gathered in times of need, seeking God's will to be known and accomplished. These prayers have often been given focus and clarity through the spiritual discipline of fasting, a voluntary and temporary abstinence (primarily) of food.

Fasting helps in deepening our attentiveness to God and God's will by turning from the desires of the body and towards the life-giving desire of serving and knowing Jesus Christ. In prayerful fasting, we are brought closer to the humble reality of our dependence upon God for all things, drawing from God as the Bread of Life, and are often given a sense of spiritual clarity which further helps hone our prayers and discernment.

"He guides the humble in what is right and teaches the humble his way." (Psalm 25:9)

The Bible speaks in many ways to practices of prayer and fasting in both individual and corporate expressions (e.g. see Exodus 34:28; Nehemiah 1:4; Matthew 4:2, 6:16-18; Mark 2:18; Luke 2:37; Acts 13:2-3, 14:23, 27:9). Jesus engaged prayer and fasting as did his disciples and other followers. Indeed, the Early Fathers and Mothers of the Church modelled and taught prayer and fasting as a universally applied practice for deepening in Christ-likeness.

On March 26, you might choose to withhold one or two meals, or if you are familiar with the practice, to avoid food throughout the day. It is important to always ensure proper hydration with water. This discipline can also include withholding any contemporary behaviour or practice that represents a significant aspect of one's daily "diet of life," such as an intake of internet/TV/media. This is especially relevant for those whom restricting food is not medically advisable.