

Kinds of Lenten Fasts

1. Food Fast
2. Spiritual Fast
 - a. Fasting from a sinful habit
 - b. Fasting from a creature comfort
 - c. Fasting from distractions

Tips for Fasting

1. Start small: Start by trying to abstain from one meal a week.
2. Fast according to your health needs
3. Plan what you are going to do during your fast. If you are fasting from breakfast, for example, and for the purpose of intercessions, then set an alarm for the time you would normally eat, and pray for time you would spend at breakfast.
4. Make prayer an integral part of your fast: Fasting and prayer always go hand in hand.
5. Direct your mind: when you experience hunger pangs, turn your attention to Jesus: *“Lord help me hunger for you,”* or *“Make me thirsty for holiness in my life,”* or *“Lord I intercede for my loved one who is hungering for peace...”* and so on.
6. Sundays are a day of rest: the day of resurrection is a day of celebration, and not a day for mourning or wanting.
7. Don't be a perfectionist: fasting is an exercise in humility! You will make mistakes. When you do, turn to the Lord, ask God's help, and try again.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

March 10, 2025

Fast from... Feast On...

(Suggestions for a Spiritual Fast)

During Lent, let us...

Fast from judging others; feast on the Christ within them.
Fast from an emphasis on difference; feast on the unity of life.
Fast from apparent darkness; feast on the reality of light.
Fast from thoughts of illness; feast on the healing power of God.

Fast from words that pollute; feast on phrases that purify.
Fast from discontent; feast on gratitude.
Fast from anger; feast on patience.
Fast from cynicism; feast on hope.

Fast from complaining; feast on gladness.
Fast from worry; feast on trust in God's Care.
Fast from unrelenting pressure; feast on unceasing prayer.
Fast from facts that depress; feast on verities that uplift.

Fast from lethargy; feast on perseverance.
Fast from thoughts that weaken; feast on promises that inspire.
Fast from shadows of sorrow; feast on the of serenity of Christ.
Fast from problems that overwhelm; feast on prayer that undergirds.
Fast from bitterness; feast on forgiveness.
Fast from self-concern; feast on compassion for others.
Fast from personal anxiety; feast on eternal truth and God's steadfast and loving presence.

-William Arthur Ward (American author, teacher and pastor, 1921-1994)
Adapted.

Praying during fasting:

Sample prayers

Pray for our Nation

Almighty God, you have given us this good land as our heritage. May we prove ourselves a people mindful of your generosity and glad to do your will. Bless our land with honest industry, truthful education, and an honourable way of life. Save us from violence, discord and confusion; from pride and arrogance; and from every evil course of action. Make us who came from many nations with many different languages a united people. Defend our liberties and give those whom we have entrusted with the authority of government the spirit of wisdom, that there may be justice and peace in our land. When times are prosperous, let our hearts be thankful; and in troubled times, do not let our trust in you fail. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN. (BAS, 678)

Pray for our Christian Witness

Holy God, you have taught us to live in the “in-between” and the “not yet” and we thought we knew how to do that. But the changes around us are happening so quickly, and there is so much confusion in our world that we are struggling. Help us find ways – big and small - to witness to our neighbours your unfailing love and steadfast care in the midst of uncertainty. Amen. *(adapted from Resist.com)*

Pray for St. Paul's

Lord God, guide and direct our church. Care for the young, support the aged, inspire the faint-hearted, and bring the wandering to your fold. Heal the sick, strengthen all who are in tribulation, necessity, or distress. Renew the faith of us all, and help us to witness to your love in Durham. Amen.

Pray penitently & pray for personal renewal

Dear God, pour out your Spirit in my heart. Revive my passion for you and transform me to become the person you want me to become. I confess that there are areas in my life where I have grown complacent or stagnant in my relationship with you. Forgive me for allowing the cares of this world and the distractions of life to distance me from you.

Thank you for your forgiveness and grace, God. I confess the specific ways I have wandered from your will — in my thoughts, words, or actions. (Confess them here).

As King David prayed, I also pray: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” Purify me from all unrighteousness,

cleansing me from sin. I want to grow in holiness, guided by your Spirit and living according to your will.

Please help me day by day to turn away from sin Give me the strength to resist temptation and flee from evil. Let the light of your truth shine into the darkest corners of my heart, exposing any hidden sins and transforming me to become more like Your Son, Jesus Christ. Give me a hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Help me develop the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Wonderful Father, I surrender my plans to you and ask for your will to be done in my life. May the people around me see your light shining through me and be drawn to you. Thank you, God, for your great love. I love you. Amen. *(Adapted from Crosswalk.com)*

Pray for those in Need

Almighty God, we remember before you the homeless, the destitute, the sick, the unemployed, the aged and all who have none to care for them. *[Add your own petitions. Pray for people you know in need, or for ministries that help those in need]* Heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this for Jesus' sake. Amen. *(Adapted BAS)*

Pray for your Enemies

O God, your Son commanded us to love our enemies and to pray for them. Lead us from prejudice to truth, deliver us from hatred, cruelty and revenge, and enable us to stand before you, reconciled through Jesus. Amen. *(Adapted BAS)*

Pray for the persecuted Church around the world

Father, we pray for those who stand in the face of opposition today. We pray for their protection, and we also pray that their words, appearance, and actions will radiate the love of Christ to their oppressors. We pray for courage and understanding in the name of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen. *Adapted from outreach.ca*

Pray for the peace of Christ to rule

O God, it is your will to hold both heaven and earth in a single peace. Let the design of your great love shine on the waste of our wraths and sorrows, and give peace to your Church, peace among nations, peace in our homes, and peace in our hearts; through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen *(BAS, p.677)*

And of course: bring to the Lord your own needs. You will find in him a friend.