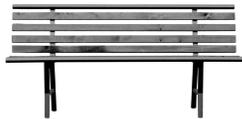


ENGAGING WITH LENT

PARKCHURCH 2019



PARKCHURCH

What is Lent and why do we observe it?

Lent is the season of 40 days leading up to Good Friday and Easter. It begins on Ash Wednesday, continues through Holy Week, and is historically marked by themes of repentance, self-examination, and preparation before Easter. Those unfamiliar with Lent might associate this season with “doing penance” and those trying to earn God’s favor, but this is the furthest thing from the truth! It actually invites us to journey deeper into the gospel...

Lent has historically invited us into the drama of the life of Jesus, particularly focusing in on His forty days in the wilderness immediately after his baptism. Jesus gave Himself to fasting and prayer and resisting the temptation of the devil. Unlike Israel in the wilderness for forty years after the Exodus, Jesus faithfully obeyed and relied on His Father! We too ask God to meet us in this intentionally set apart time, knowing our weakness and inability to do anything without His Spirit. May Lent lead us into increased intimacy with the Father, appreciation for the sacrifice of His Son, and dependence on the Spirit’s power in our lives!

How do we celebrate Lent?

...as a church family

We will begin the season of Lent with **Ash Wednesday** services on March 6th at 6:30am and 6:30pm at the Park Church building. This service will last about an hour, and we will engage in prayer and song together as well as receive the imposition of the ashes. Ash Wednesday is a day to stare at death in the face and acknowledge our mortality, to be honest about our sin and need for a Savior, and to joyfully remember we are not those without hope because of the work of Jesus!

Throughout the season of Lent, we invite everyone interested to join us on Sundays at 8:15am and 4:15pm in the basement for **pre-service prayer**. These times will be given to worship, intercession, and listening prayer as we cry out with expectancy for God to move in our gatherings and in our hearts during the Lenten season. Children are welcome!

During Holy Week (the final week leading up to Easter), some Gospel Communities gather for **Maundy Thursday** to celebrate the night that Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, gave final instructions, and washed his disciples’ feet.

We will also celebrate with **Good Friday** services on the evening of April 19th where we allow the Scriptures to take us to the scene of our Lord’s betrayal, arrest, trial, crucifixion and burial, setting us up for a deep celebration of Jesus’ resurrection on Easter Sunday. We will have two services at the Park Church building: 5:30pm and 7pm.

...personally and with family and friends

Three spiritual disciplines are often tied to the season of Lent: fasting, prayer, and generosity (or almsgiving). These three disciplines are all found in Jesus’ famous Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:1-18, and we want to find intentional ways of exploring these three together. While we don’t have enough space below to fully explore these disciplines, we’ve put some additional ideas and resources here: www.parkchurchdenver.org/lent

Fasting - To fast is, in the words of David Mathis, “voluntarily going without food — or any other regularly enjoyed, good gift from God — for the sake of some spiritual purpose.” We fast in order to feast on God and pursue Him in intentional ways in a focused season!

Prayer - Prayer is one of the main ways we feast on God! Fight for this discipline during Lent. Find some simple ways to pray with others corporately (pre-service prayer on Sundays, gospel communities, Thursdays at Park at 6:30am, etc.), as well as engaging personally (some ideas include picking a daily psalm or the Lord’s Prayer, journaling prayer, prayer of examen, etc.).

Generosity - As we fast from food or particular hobbies that cost money, we want to be open to re-directing the money saved and invest that somewhere else. How might God be directing you to be generous with your time, energy, and money in this season of Lent? This practice works in conjunction with fasting and prayer and aids in shaping us in looking more Christlike. It’s a reminder that our spirituality affects all aspects of our lives, including our bank account and how we view money.

Keep in mind these practices take some thought and planning. Try to carve some time to talk to a friend or spouse about your Lenten strategy a few days before Lent and continue to follow up throughout the season. Ask God to lead you and keep things simple. Whatever ways you choose to observe the season of Lent, aim to cultivate deeper affections for the triune God and to practice your faith in such a way that He gets great glory and our city becomes a better place.

Resources for Lent

- “*Jesus, Keep Me Near The Cross*” - A great collection of devotional readings by various theologians and Bible teachers (like Tim Keller & John Piper) intended to prepare hearts for a fresh experience of the cross. Edited by Nancy Guthrie. \$10 at the bookstore.
- “*Journey To The Cross*” - a Lenten devotional written by one of the coauthors of “Gospel-Centered Life” that includes daily Scripture readings & prayers. \$10 at the bookstore.
- “*Hunger For God*” - for those hoping to explore what the discipline of fasting has to do with the Christian life, this is an amazing helpful resource from John Piper. \$10 at the bookstore. There’s a free PDF of the book here: <https://www.desiringgod.org/books/a-hunger-for-god>