

2.3.21

T: Can I understand the importance of prayer, fasting and almsgiving?



Lent

Lent is a season for Christians to pray and fast as Jesus did in the desert and to try and resist temptation to do what is wrong.

There are three pillars of Lent:

Prayer
Fasting
Almsgiving

LENT
Pray + Fast + Give



What is prayer?

Prayer is a form of communication, a way of talking to God, Mary or to the saints. Sometimes we pray for help or we may pray to say thank you. It is often easier to pray in silence without any distractions.



What is fasting?

During Lent, there are two days of fasting and abstinence: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. On days of fasting, Christians will only eat one meal and abstain from eating meat. Many Christians also give up a food/drink during Lent to remind them of the sacrifice Jesus made in the desert without any food or drink for 40 days and 40 nights.



What is almsgiving?

Almsgiving is often known as giving money to charity, but it is much more than that. It involves giving food to those in need and most importantly your time. During Lent, Christians use the teachings of Jesus to show their generosity and offer to help others.



Let's look in the Bible to see what Jesus teaches about prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

If you have a Bible at home, you can read the teachings of Jesus in **Matthew 6: 1-18.**



Matthew 6:1-18

Concerning Almsgiving

6 "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

2 "So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. **3** But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, **4** so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.^[a]

Concerning Prayer

5 "And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. **6** But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.^[b]

7 "When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. **8** Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.



Matthew 6:1-18

9 "Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.^[a]

12 And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And do not bring us to the time of trial,^[a]
but rescue us from the evil one.^[a]

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; **15** but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Concerning Fasting

16 "And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. **17** But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, **18** so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.^[a]



What has Jesus taught us?

Do not boast about giving to charity. God already knows if you are helping others.

Jesus taught us the Lord's prayer which we still use today.

When you fast, do not show you are fasting to others. Only God needs to know of your sacrifice.



Today's Task

Your task today is to display the importance of the three pillars of Lent: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. You may choose to design a poster or create a PowerPoint presentation. Remember to explain the meaning of each pillar and you may want to include pictures.

There is also a template available for you to use if you wish.

