



GPS: Grow, Pray, Study Guide 2.22.15

Rachel Held Evans, edited from her God article blog.



5 Questions to Ask Yourself

1. When I wake up on Resurrection Sunday morning, how will I be different? What am I preparing for?
2. Is there something in my life—a habit, a grudge, a fear, a prejudice, an addiction, an emotional barrier, a form of excess—that keeps me from loving God with my heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving my neighbor as myself? How might I address that over the next 40 days?
3. Lent is a time to listen to God, but sometimes God speaks through others, particularly the poor, oppressed, marginalized, and suffering. To whom should I be listening this season? How can I cultivate a listening posture toward others whose perspective and experiences might differ from my own?
4. Is there a spiritual discipline—praying the hours, lectio divina, the examen—that I've always wanted to try? How might I alter my daily routine to include one of these disciplines?
5. The cycle of death and resurrection is central to the Christian faith. In what ways is that cycle present in my life right now? Where might there be necessary change, suffering, death and decay, and how might new life emerge from those experiences?

Fasts & Disciplines

Practice the prayer of examen each day. This daily spiritual discipline (credited to St. Ignatius of Loyola) invites the participant to concentrate on the experiences of the past 24-hours through four prayerful stages: presence, gratitude, review, and response.

Traditionally, Christians abstained from eating meat during Lent, so consider joining millions of Christians around the world in this fast. It's a great way to connect with the historical, worldwide church and to become more mindful about the food you eat.

For families with children: Consider eating fish sticks on Fridays, bury "Alleluias" (then resurrect them on Easter morning), making paper chains of God moments shared around the table each day, and keeping a gratitude jar.

Make or purchase Anglican Prayer Beads and devote yourself to praying through them three times a day. Or go for a healthy soul routine where you pray more than you brush your teeth which should be for 2 minutes twice a day.

Go on a mini-pilgrimage. Set aside a day (or even a weekend) during Lent to visit a nearby monastery. Or visit ELUMC on Thursday afternoons at 5 for prayer in the chapel.

Get creative with what you "give up." A few years ago, I gave up sleeping in for Lent and found that fast surprisingly challenging and meaningful. I committed to rising just before dawn each day to pray, which not only broke my night-owl habits but also turned my heart and mind to the significance of the pre-dawn dark in the death and resurrection cycle. As Barbara Brown Taylor says: "...New life starts in the dark. Whether it is a seed in the ground, a baby in the womb, or Jesus in the tomb, it starts in the dark." I learned a lot in those quiet, dark moments.

Other things you might want to consider "giving up": social media, cynicism (replace with wonder, compassion, and hope), perfectionism, legalism, TV, sugar, reading authors and bloggers who tend to look and think like you, comparison, etc. One fast that has crossed my mind this week is the idea of giving up the consumption of people for Lent. Our culture (through social media, reality TV, celebrity gossip, etc.) has so profoundly commodified people—actual human beings— it's become a phenomenon we hardly even notice anymore. Only recently have I been contemplating the significance of this trend, catching myself in the act of commodifying and consuming other people and also experiencing the pain of being commodified and consumed myself. I'm not exactly sure what "giving it up" would look like, but I'd like to try.

Participate in the UM photo-a-day discipline.

2015 LENT PHOTO-A-DAY
FEBRUARY 18- APRIL 5

FEBRUARY	MARCH	MARCH
18 ANNOUNCE	6 BELOVED	25 TRUTH
19 LOOK	7 SPEAK	26 SEEK
20 ALONE	8 CELEBRATE	27 MEDITATE
21 JOY	9 SABBATH	28 SEE
22 CELEBRATE	10 KNOWLEDGE	29 CELEBRATE
23 COVENANT	11 WISE	30 LIVE
24 PATH	12 STOP	31 CALL
25 REMEMBER	13 PRACTICE	
26 PLACE	14 SEARCH	APRIL
27 WAIT	15 CELEBRATE	1 PEACE
28 POWERS	16 WILDERNESS	2 BREATH
	17 ENDURE	3 PROSPER
	18 BELIEVE	4 REFUGE
MARCH	19 LIGHT	5 GO
1 CELEBRATE	20 PLACE	
2 BLESS	21 STILL	
3 NEAR	22 CELEBRATE	
4 POOR	23 FORGIVE	
5 FOLLOW	24 MERCY	

#RETHINKCHURCH
@UMRETHINKCHURCH
RETHINKCHURCH.org/lent

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church*