

Spiritual Exercises for Fasting (from *the Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun)

1. To deepen your understanding of how Jesus denied himself and embraced suffering and death for you, practice some sort of fasting during Lent. When fasting is difficult, share your thoughts and feelings with Jesus. What does Jesus say to you? Tell Jesus what it means to you to share and fellowship with him in his sufferings.
2. Fast one meal a week. Spend your mealtime in prayer. When you feel hungry, sit with Jesus in the wilderness and feed on the bread of heaven. Talk to Jesus about what his self-denial means to you.
3. For a period of one week, fast from media, sports, shopping, reading or use of the computer. Dedicate the time you now have to God. What feelings arise in you? What thoughts interrupt your prayer?
4. During Lent, particularly focus on Jesus and his temptation in the wilderness. Enter the story in your imagination. What do you and Jesus talk about? How are you tempted to indulge yourself? How does it help you to talk to Jesus about this?
5. Make two lists: one of needs, the other of wants. Ask God to show you where to fast from some of your wants. Offer to God the time you spend hankering after your wants.
6. Abstain from purchasing morning coffee or daily sodas or evening videos. Offer the money or time to God.
7. When facing a trial, decide on a fast that gives you time to seek God's strength in your journey.