**THE 2024 LENT FAST, PRAYER AND THEME: ” Enhancing the Old, Embracing the New”**

**Isaiah 43:18**

**(LOVE, JUSTICE, EQUALITY & TRUTH) – LUKE 18:1-43**

We will be doing the Daniel Fast either as a part of Lent **(Midnight February 14 - March 28**) or as a part of Holy Week (**March 24 - March 30**).

**Lent** means "the 40 days” from Ash Wednesday to Resurrection Sunday observed by Christian churches as a period of penitence and fasting. Lent is meant to be a time of repentance. An awareness that sin separates us from God and of what it costs Him to be reunited with us.

***Fasting and prayer*** are often linked together ([Luke 2:37](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%202.37); [5:33](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%205.33)). Too often, the focus of fasting is on the lack of food. Instead, the purpose of fasting should be to take your eyes off the things of this world to focus completely on God. This is another opportunity to come to God for guidance and face our individual challenges and our corporate challenges. This helps us to stay more focused on being in one accord in unity in the body of Christ. Remember that Jesus is our pattern and that He has already won the victory for us. We are called to present our bodies as living sacrifices and not to crawl off the altar in disobedience. Turning our plates over is not easy and so it is hard to crucify the flesh. When we offer God our whole selves, it is our sacrifice, AND our ‘**promise to come!**’ Fasting helps us gain a new perspective and a renewed reliance upon God. Fasting is to be done in a spirit of humility and a joyful attitude. [Matthew 6:16-18](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matthew%206.16-18) declares, “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth; they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

**According to Webster**, unity is the state of being one, oneness. Unity may consist of a simple substance or existing being, such as the soul; but usually, it consists of a close junction of particles or parts, constituting a body detached from other bodies. Unity is a thing undivided by itself but separates from every other thing. Thus, this fast represents our individual and corporately giving of our best and our sacrifice to God during the Lent season to establish this pattern throughout the year and years to come.

**\_\_\_\_\_\_When You Fast\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Fasting is an opportunity to humble ourselves before God by willingly depriving ourselves of many of the pleasurable amenities of life such as eating, and/or extraneous social interaction for a prescribed period. This is not to say that any of these things are bad-they are God’s gifts to us. However, we often neglect the Giver by over-indulging in His gifts. There is nothing magical about fasting. Its purpose is to call us away from those busy places in our lives to hear and see clearly from God. Fasting is not for God; it is for us. Fasting does not change God, it changes us.

**Fast Guidelines**

This time of fasting and consecration to God should be a time of sacrifice. When you have a meal, please eat healthier foods. **Things to avoid during the designated fasting time include** pop (soda), desserts, alcohol, tobacco, candy, and junk food. The Mount Zion 2024 Annual Lenten Fasting will begin at midnight on **February 14 and ends on March 28 at midnight.**

**Challenges for each week**

* Make time for prayer. Get to your personal prayer place. Follow the daily readings provided by the church and meditate (ponder, consider, and find ways to apply them to your life).
* Get some exercise. Try to walk, run, or bike so that you are able to enjoy nature this week.
* Drink more water than you normally do.
* Find time to pray with someone (use the phone if necessary)
* Pray for your family, community, church, co-workers, this nation, and the world.
* Stop to Pray at **noon, 3 pm, and 6 pm** during Fast**.** Remember this is a process of growth so we must be patient with ourselves and others. God honors our diligently seeking Him.

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Fasting Intentions\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

As you begin this fast, it is important that you set your intentions. Without set intentions or goals, this time of fasting will only be a test of your human will as opposed to a time set aside for God to deal with your heart. Before writing down any goals, take some time before God in prayer. Ask Him for revelation during this time of consecration. Perhaps God has already been speaking to your heart over the past few weeks. If so, ask Him for clarity and a willing heart to obey.

**What are your personal reasons for joining the Lenten Fast?**

**Set your intentions for this fast:**

Example: I want God to reveal to me the things that keep me from becoming unified with others.

1)

2)

3)

**What are some things that you will do during this time of fasting that will help you to draw closer to God?**

Example: I will make space at the beginning of my day so that I can hear from God.

1)

2)

3)