

Lent and the Spiritual Disciplines

Depending upon which denomination you grew up in, Lent may or may not have been an important time in your spiritual life. **The season of Lent originated in the 4th century A.D., and it spans 40 weekdays beginning on Ash Wednesday.** The final week of Lent is called Holy Week and includes Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and concludes on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. Colors in the church are coordinated with the church calendar. During Lent, the colors you typically see in a sanctuary are purple, red violet or dark violet. These particular colors are chosen because they symbolize both the pain and suffering leading up to Jesus' crucifixion, as well as the suffering of sinful humanity. But, purple is also a royal color, and that very much represents our king Jesus. Black is often used on Good Friday and Holy Saturday to symbolize the darkness that sin brought to the world. Those of the Catholic faith are familiar with Lent because it's still very much a part of the church today. Not so much for those in the Protestant faith.

Before Martin Luther nailed the Ninety-Five Theses on the church door at the University of Wittenburg (Germany) in 1517, there was only one Christian church and everyone observed holy days, church feasts and the daily office in the same way. With the start of the Reformation, much of these observances were thrown out—because they were associated with “high church.” High church uses liturgical, ceremonial, traditional and Catholic elements in worship.

Today, however, some Protestant churches are finding that maybe they have thrown out “the baby with the bath water,” and are recovering some of these aspects of historical Christian tradition as a way to enrich their spiritual lives—especially

in a culture that is becoming incre



With that in mind, some Protestant Christians are putting a greater emphasis on Lent by praying and preparing themselves for Easter. Today, we can use this time for introspection, self-examination and repentance. **At Only By Prayer, we are going to begin a series on the spiritual disciplines to help equip you to prepare for Easter.** If you feel led to do so, you can incorporate some of these practices into your days throughout this season of Lent. We are looking forward to this journey and pray God will bless your through it.

We'll start tomorrow with the first spiritual discipline. Join us, won't you?

Pray on!

Joe

Some of this information is taken from "The Season of Lent" by Dennis Bratcher.