



Message from the Moderator

 Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand

Fasting Fridays

Lent 2018

Lent, in the Christian calendar, is defined as a period of spiritual preparation for the highlight of the Easter celebration.

Easter is the highpoint of the Christian calendar. Arguably it is from this point that all liturgy and Christian worship begin.

One of the most common approaches to Lent was the practice of fasting – largely from food or specific food types. Why fasting?

In the Old Testament (OT) perhaps the ‘top quality’ of a follower of God was humility. All things in maturity came down to a fundamental humility which enabled the believer to live a life of obedience before God and a life of friendship towards others. The key practice in developing humility was... fasting. So, in James 4 we have this passage:

“⁶ But he gives all the more grace; therefore it says, ‘God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’”

In the OT we find that Moses, the key figure of the OT, was “more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth”. Again, in Psalm 149 we read:

“⁴ **For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with victory**”.

But how is this humility obtained? Again in both testaments one of the key answers to that question is... **to fast**.

Psalm 35v13 says, “¹³ But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; **I humbled myself with fasting**”.

And again, in Ezra 8 we read:

“²¹ **Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God**, to seek from him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions”.

The notion of both the importance of humility and the link to fasting is clear. Today we need to retrieve this spiritual gift because we live in an age so dominated by the glory of technology that we have become almost allergic to proper reflection and meditation.

Let me reiterate my initial claim that Christian maturity is dependent upon the development of a deep reflectiveness which grows out of humility.

So come, fast with me that we might know again that humility which should be the mark of all Christians and of the Church. We have six Fridays before Easter. How about we do our best to miss a meal, or even two, on those Fridays? I will give you a run-down on how I am going on my blog <https://moderator.presbyterian.org.nz>. Let's see where God leads us together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Dawson'.

Richard Dawson (Moderator)