

Lent

It's beginning to look a lot like spring, which means soon it will be Easter, the celebration of the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is a highly celebrative time for Christians. As the Passover is for the Jews, we Christians, pause to remember, thank God and celebrate Jesus sacrificing His life for the sins of the world. His death, burial and resurrection are foundational to our faith. Ebenezer is certainly excited and have started preparing for this High Holy Day by participating in Ash Wednesday Services and the 40 day preparation period call Lent.

Ash Wednesday is when the church gathers for confession of their sins and ashes in the shape of a cross is put on their forehead. This is symbolic of repentance and a commitment that is made to spend time in God's presence disciplining the flesh that the spirit may become stronger.

Lent is a time for penance (repentance of sin). It occurs during the 40 days, actually 46 days before Easter. In a voluntary outward expression of our desire to turn away from sin and develop a closer relationship with God, we abstain from something. During the 40 days (chosen to represent the 40 days Jesus fasted before commencing His ministry), Christians Fast and Pray to God. Additionally, we serve and give (time, talent and treasure) showing our love for God and humanity.

Lent is a time of self-examination. It is a time to seek God and to ask Him to reveal you to you. As you self-reflect, you can gain a better awareness of where you are as a Christian. Are you growing? Are you stagnant? Are you high-minded or egotistical? Is your confidence too low? How do you view yourself in comparison to the precepts of the Bible? Are we too complacent? With this new understanding of ourselves, and the strength we gain during our increased time with God in prayer, we begin to implement the person we are purposed to be.

It is a time to identify our weaknesses, repent and renew our dependence on God.

It is a time to intentionally serve others. This would include things like witnessing about our faith and our gratitude to Jesus Christ; feeding the hungry; providing clothing, housing, medicine or meeting some other need of others. We can start by being genuinely kind to others. Try smiling and see what impact it have on those around you. Praying for others that God may release a specific blessing in their lives. The list can go on and on...

Don't forget to add some Bible study time to your fasting and praying. It is a great time to start journaling all you will receive from God.