

ASH WEDNESDAY 2023: CHRIST CHURCH AUSTIN

“More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us.” (Richard Foster)

Prayerfully consider whether any of the following practices might help you realign priorities and set your affections in order.

Acts of Negation

1. **Food:** cut out sweets, coffee, soda, fast food, meat, dairy, etc.
2. **Media/Tech:** fast from TV, movies, music, magazines, newspapers, social media, video games. Consider listening to no music while you drive. Instead spend that time praying and listening to God.
3. **Health:** go to bed earlier, rise earlier. Make good sleep a priority.
4. **Speech:** prune negativity or talkativeness or complaining, or simply practice times of silence throughout the day.
5. **Busyness:** slow down, cut out unnecessary activities, plan less, say no, take a proper Sabbath, leave your work at work.
6. **Distraction:** If your smartphone is a form of distraction, consider disciplines of “quarantining” your phone for stretches of time.
7. **Consumerism:** commit to buy nothing new during Lent. Practice simplicity. Give money/things away.

Acts of Engagement

1. **Acts of service:** consider one act of service per week. Serve in secret. Volunteer to help. Or offer to serve a neighbor or friend or family or church ministry in need.
2. **Almsgiving:** Practice sacrificial generosity as a way to reinforce your trust in God in the area of your finances. Give especially to the poor.
3. **Acts of mercy:** carry food packets with you in the car to give away to people at intersections. Serve the poor. Visit the sick or those in prison. Pursue racial reconciliation.
4. **Read** a spiritual formation book, listen to audio Bible, pray, journal regularly.
5. Commit to a daily/weekly **exercise** program.
6. **Gratitude:** write a thank you note once a week.
7. Seek **reconciliation** with a friend or family member.
8. **Stillness:** Instead of watching a movie with your family and friends, plan a walk or adventure in nature. Be with people leisurely. Just *be*.
9. **Sustainability:** instead of driving somewhere, bike. Instead of biking, walk. Instead of driving alone, carpool. Ride the bus.