



- *integral to community life*
- *welcoming and joyful in worship*
- *inspiring and loving in our ministry to children*

Dear All,

I thought I'd set a quiz this month.

How much do you know about Lent? Pick the correct answer...



1. The word Lent is derived from...
 - a) the "Old English lencten meaning springtime, spring"
 - b) Jesus told us to "Lend your hearts to doing good at this time."
 - c) The Church lent out Bibles to the poor leading up to Easter.
2. How many days are there in Lent?
 - a) 36
 - b) 40
 - c) 46
3. If that number is correct, why are there actually more days between Ash Wednesday, when Lent starts and Easter Sunday, when it finishes?
 - a) Sundays are celebration days so we should only fast 6 days a week.
 - b) Lent finishes on the Monday before Easter Sunday - we shouldn't fast during Holy Week?
 - c) In 1756 the calendar was changed from the Gregorian calendar to the Julian calendar and hence we added extra days.
4. What is meant to happen during Lent?
 - a) We are meant to give money to charity during this time.
 - b) We are meant to give up eating some of our favourite foods.
 - c) We are meant to fast and pray.

5. Is Lent a bit like making New Year Resolutions?

- a) Yes, we try to self improve in both of these.
- b) Yes, in both we set ourselves goals.
- c) No, Lent has nothing to do with self-improvement unlike New Year Resolutions.

6. What should we give up during Lent?

- a) chocolate
- b) pornography
- c) alcohol

7. Which of these prayers should we pray every day during Lent?

- a) The Lord's Prayer - Our Father who art in Heaven...'
 - b) Lord have mercy.
 - c) 'Lord I know I gave up chocolate but I only ate a little bit.'
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Answers

1a - Lent comes from the Old English for Spring - I wonder what they call Lent in Australia!

2b - Lent is 40 days long

3a - Who knew this!! The time between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday is 46 days - but we don't fast on the 6 Sundays.

4c - Fasting and praying - so that our faith is stronger. I imagine it's like a yearly intensive course to know God better so we can trust in God's goodness more.

5c - Lent hasn't got anything to do with strengthening our own self-will. It's more to do with finding out what God is like. Hence we fast which helps us pray in a more concentrated way (or that's the theory).

6a, b or c - Anything which stops us being the people God wants us to be, we should attend to - with help if necessary (AA, counselling, Slimmers World etc). But this is a long term goal not just for Lent. God loves fat people as well as thin people!

7b - Of course, any prayer can be prayed during Lent but 'holy men and women' have found that knowing more about God makes us realise how loved we are yet also how sinful we are. Therefore - 'Lord have mercy' is a good Lenten prayer.

They too have experienced hard times. For Helen, the death of her dad who lived in France was difficult - the feelings of loss were almost overwhelming. She said that Sam was her 'rock' during this time. He was calm and listened to her over and over wanting to talk about her dad. He 'kept her going' and was 'respectful' of her feelings. One of the things he did for her and which she said really helped was for a while he lit a candle in their hurricane lamp so when she came back from work she saw it.

Sam also talked about how recently he was unemployed for a year and how hard it was to be positive. Month after month he applied for hundreds of jobs and rarely heard back from any of them. He said Helen encouraged him and believed in him and this kept him believing he had worth. At last he found a job which he's happy in and he's been there a year now.

God loves us and wants to be with us in the good times and also in the bad. When marriages work well, we encourage and care for each other and so grow to be the people God calls us to be.

In this service we will pray and ask God to bless our relationships so that we can work at maintaining this cherishing of each other.

Jan - Revd Jan Ashton