

Community growing
in the love of Jesus

A resource for Lent

Prayer for All

St Stephen's
Ealing

This isn't a journey you're going on alone,
and something God says to you might also
encourage other people.
So as you join us on this prayer journey, we'd
love to hear how God is speaking to you.
Email prayerforall@ststephens-ealing.org and
we'll find a way to share those reflections with
the St Stephen's family.
Or why not share your prayers on social media?
Use the hashtag #prayerforall, and tag
[@ststephensw13](https://twitter.com/ststephensw13)

The Christian year is punctuated by feasts and fasts. Before the feasts of Christmas and Easter, there are two periods of fasting. The fasts are a time of preparing ourselves spiritually so that we can celebrate the feasts with all the joy and enthusiasm they deserve. More deeply, they are about putting to death the things that are less good in our lives so that we can truly recognise the gift of new life.

Lent is one of these fasts. You've probably heard people say, 'I'm giving that up for Lent.' These days you're more likely to hear them say, 'I'm taking that up for Lent.' But it's not an either-or, because at its best, Lent is about giving up and taking up. The idea is that we give up something – remembering that anything we have is a gift from God – and take up prayer or study that will renew our spiritual lives.

Jesus did this. At the very beginning of his teaching and healing ministry, he spent 40 days alone in the desert fasting and praying. It was all a time of preparation, learning how to follow God his Father more closely. These 40 days (plus 7 'rest' days) of Lent are an invitation to enter our own desert with Jesus that we might learn to follow God our Father more closely too.

That's where this resource comes in! It's an invitation to give up just 15 minutes every day during Lent, and to take up a journey of prayer. It's a journey you can take by yourself, but it is designed to be taken with others whether that be your household, or the wider St Stephen's family. It is designed to be accessible for all ages from primary school and up. And at 15 minutes (or less if necessary) it should be easy enough to fit in after a meal or before bed.

On the inner pages of this booklet, you'll find the prayer guide and a set of short Bible passages to take you through the whole of Lent. And on the back, you'll find details on how to share your prayers, if you want to.

Most of this time of prayer is self-explanatory. A couple of comments may be helpful though. The parts in normal type are to be read out loud, Anything in italic type is an unsaid direction (though children may need some help, of course!)

The opening and closing prayers are breath prayers. The idea is to breathe slowly, saying the first line in your mind as you inhale, and the second as you exhale. If praying as a group, one person can gently lead these sections, slowly saying the lines out loud, and encouraging everyone to control their breathing. Repeat at least 3 times.

There will always be the temptation to rush these prayers and to tick the 'I've done my prayer for today' box. Remember that the aim is to spend time with God. Take it slowly.

Begin with a few deep breaths

Breath prayer	(inhale) God, you are speaking now; (exhale) help me to listen.
Opening prayer	Lord Jesus, I want to follow you today. Show me the way I should go and help me to turn away from every distraction. This I ask in your holy name. Amen.

Bible reading	<i>See the list of readings on the pages below</i>
Listening to God	<i>What does this reading tell you about Jesus?</i>
Reflection	<i>Spend a few minutes in quiet or talking with others about what you have learnt.</i>
Lord's prayer	Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.
Breath prayer	(inhale) God, thank you for speaking; (exhale) let your voice shape my life.

Top tips as you read the Bible with others:

- 1. Choose an accessible translation.** The International Children's Bible is particularly good for children. This translation (and others) can be found on the YouVersion Bible app: <https://www.bible.com/app>
- 2. Read slowly out loud,** one voice at a time. There's no need to rush. Consider breaking the passage up into shorter sections so that different voices can be heard.
- 3. Don't worry about what the passage means.** Focus instead on what you think God is saying to you.

Week 1

Weds Matt 21:6-11
Thurs John 12:1-4
Fri John 12:23-28
Sat Mark 11:15-19
Sun Rest

Week 2

Mon Matt 21:28-32
Tues Mark 12:1-8
Weds Matt 11:2-6
Thurs Luke 18:15-17
Fri Luke 20:20-26
Sat Matt 22:34-40
Sun Rest

Week 3

Mon Matt 23:1-4
Tues Mark 12:41-44
Weds Mark 13:1-8
Thurs Matt 24:26-31
Fri Matt 24:42-44
Sat Matt 25:1-10
Sun Rest

Week 4

Mon Matt 23:1-4
Tues Mark 12:41-44
Weds Mark 13:1-8
Thurs Matt 24:26-31
Fri Matt 24:42-44
Sat Matt 25:1-10
Sun Rest

Week 5

Mon John 13:21-26
Tues Luke 22:24-27
Weds Matt 26:31-35
Thurs John 14:1-6
Fri John 14:15-19
Sat John 15:12-17
Sun Rest

Week 6

Mon John 17:21-23
Tues Matt 26:36-39
Weds John 18:1-8
Thurs John 18:12-17
Fri John 18:19-24
Sat Mark 5:1-14
Sun Rest

Week 7

Mon Mark 15:15-20
Tues Matt 27:32-37
Weds Luke 23:32, 39-43
Thurs Luke 23:44-49
Fri John 19:38-42
Sat Luke 24:1-8
Sun Matthew 28:8-10