



Good Morning, Church!

By Rev. Dr. Carl K. Ellis, Founder and Executive Director
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Lent: A Time to Reboot

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Yes, I was a bit impatient and frustrated with my computer, and I hit too many keys on the keyboard and gave too many commands too quickly. My computer froze. I stopped for a few seconds and then tried hitting keys again and giving commands. Finally, I gave up and called my brother for help. He calmly suggested that I shut the computer down and, in computer terms, reboot it. You get rid of all the different commands you tried to get the computer to do, which messed up its system and caused it to stop working. And the miracle happened. After I rebooted the computer, the computer began to work perfectly.

I am unsure if our minds are like the computer or the computer is like our minds. The point is that there are times when we need to shut down, that is, reboot our lives. We have hectic work schedules and jam-packed family obligations. Even those who have retired wonder why they are busier in retirement than they were when they had a job. Others look forward to getting back to work after vacation so they can rest.

Yes, like the computer that is overwhelmed, stops working, and needs to reboot, we also need to stop and reboot.

Lent is a great time to stop and reboot. Jesus began his ministry by going to the desert for 40 days to center on God's will and the way he wanted his life to be. Throughout his ministry, we read that Jesus took time to go to the hills to pray. And yes, Jesus observed the Sabbath.

If Jesus needed to get away and take time, we probably need to take time.

During the forty days of Lent, there are three things we can do.

First, we can share alms. They are above and beyond our tithe. We can give up going to dinner and give that money to a soup kitchen or shelter. We can (I know I will be in trouble with my coffee-drinking friends) give up going to Starbucks for coffee and donate that money to a soup kitchen.

Second, we can take time to pray and meditate. I realized that sometimes speed-read the Lord's prayer. Then I discovered that when I say the Lord's Prayer over and over, saying the words, I move from reading to praying. Use scripture to guide your prayer. I often use the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) as a prayer guide.

Third, take time to fast by giving up food (but never water) or something we do daily, like playing a game on our cell phone, watching television, or getting wrapped up in political wrestling matches. Then, when we feel the urge to eat or do the thing we gave up, we use that urge as a call to prayer. Remember, this is between us and God. We don't have to announce to the world what we are doing. The purpose of fasting is to strengthen our relationship with God through prayer and meditation.

Lent is a great time to reboot. A time when we remember all Jesus gave up for us as we celebrate and remember God's love, hope and grace.



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