

Dear First Presbyterian Church Children,

On Good Friday, the adults in our church are fasting. Do you know what fasting is? I bet you can think of people in the Bible who fasted...like Ezra, Daniel, Paul and even Jesus. They were in different situations, but the purpose of their fasting was the same -- to draw nearer to God.

I have never fasted before, and honestly, didn't know much about it until recently. Fasting is giving up food for a short time to pray and show our love for God. Often, we see men and women in the Bible fast when there is something very important on their hearts. While God doesn't have to respond to our fasting the way we think He should, we see in the Bible that God often answers the prayers of His people who are fasting.

The Bible teaches that there are three important things to remember about fasting. First, fasting must be God focused; it can't be about making us look good. We don't fast to show God how special or obedient we are. We fast so that we can draw nearer to God and focus on how wonderful He is. Second, when we fast, we admit that everything we have comes from God. He provides every good and perfect gift for us even though we don't deserve these gifts.

Finally, when we draw near to God by fasting, we focus our thoughts and prayers on very specific needs around us. We are turning aside from our food to draw near to God who is our provider and to lift up very specific prayers to Him. That's what fasting is.

Because your body is still growing, it might be hard for you to fast for as long as your parents. But maybe you can think about eating a smaller breakfast or skipping a snack so that you can spend more time in prayer. Some of the things you might pray when fasting include: Thanking God for who He is--that He is loving, kind, merciful, generous; Thanking God for sending Jesus to save us; Asking for forgiveness for sins; Praying for the sick and the doctors and nurses taking care of them; Praying that people who don't know Jesus yet will come to faith in Him.

I have learned that fasting is an important part of our walk with God. Will you join me and your parents in fasting and praying on Good Friday?

Love,  
Mrs. Anna