

## Fasting

Fasting can be helpful both spiritually and ecologically. Christ assumes his followers will be fasting (Matt 6: 17-18), although it is a practice the western church has rather let slip. The Orthodox Churches still take fasting very seriously and observe a vegan diet (no meat or dairy) most Wednesdays and Fridays of the year, and throughout all of Lent. It is a way of practising self-control (a “fruit of the Spirit” – Galatians 5:23) and also of living in harmony with a planet that cannot support a modern western lifestyle forever. Do note, people with health conditions have never been expected to fast.



### Meat and the climate debate:

We Westerners eat more meat and dairy than is healthy for us or our planet. Meat and dairy typically generate higher emissions of greenhouse gases and take more land to produce than plant-based sources of protein (nuts, pulses etc.), which is why for the sake of Creation we'll all need to eat less meat and more veg. That said, Welsh pasture fed cows and sheep are much more sustainably produced (less greenhouse gas emissions) than the increasingly common practice of intensively feeding livestock on imported grains. So it is quite possible to eat less meat and dairy and still support the local community if what we do buy, we buy local from the butcher or Welsh milk producer.

## Dietary fasts to consider

*Important : Do not fast if you're not healthy enough to do so (if you are diabetic, for example). If in doubt do check with your doctors surgery*

Here are three different dietary fasts you might consider:

- 1 **Go 'Orthodox'**: No meat or dairy on Wednesdays and Fridays
2. **Reduce what you eat**: skip lunch one or two days per week.
3. **Adopt the Planetary Health Diet**



## ***Other Fasts you might consider***

### ***A) Take a Carbon Fast***

Take action to reduce your emissions of Carbon dioxide, one of the gasses responsible for global warming. You can do this by using less energy that comes from 'fossil fuels' (oil, gas, coal). Some suggestions include:



1. **Reduce your car journeys.** Why not have a car free day once per week. Share a lift, use public transport, walk or cycle.
2. **Drive more slowly!** Why not commit to driving no faster than 60 mph. At 60 miles per hour you burn 30 per cent less fuel than if you drive 80 miles per hour.
3. **Turn off lights** when you are not in the room. Don't leave lights on when you go out.
4. **Only boil as much water in the kettle as you need.**
5. **Hang washing outside** on dry days rather than using the tumble drier.
6. **All the above**

### ***B) Take a Plastic Fast***

Commit to giving up using one single-use plastic item for 40 days (or more!). You could give up plastic cups, plastic bags, or use no plastic drinks bottles.

The Tearfund Plastic Pledge initiative will help give you some ideas of what to give up, and how to replace it: [https://www.tearfund.org/about\\_you/action/rubbishplasticpledge/](https://www.tearfund.org/about_you/action/rubbishplasticpledge/)



### **C) Take a Shopping Fast'**

Do you need it? No? Then don't buy it.

Why not take a fast from non-essential shopping over Lent. For example, why not give up buying any new clothes: if you really do need something, could you buy second hand? Or do you really need that newspaper every day, that book, that CD? Could you borrow or share things?