



## **Pre Lent Spiritual Check 1**

St Luke's Church 2015

We are approaching the season of Lent – Ash Wednesday is February 18<sup>th</sup>. And as we draw close, it may be that it is some time since we have had the chance to examine our lives and our spiritual health. Lent is a wonderful opportunity to look and see where we may have grown lazy, or rusty, or simply forgotten one of the joys of following Jesus, and to put all that right in a kind of spiritual spring clean.

This week and next we will be taking some time to think and pray and talk about what we might want to put right, or do more, or start doing to give more of ourselves to God and grow more like Jesus.

## 1) Church – what priority do I put on attending church?

<sup>24</sup> And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another. [Hebrews 10]

Church is not a consumer activity, we turn up when we like what is on offer – church is the place where we meet God's people (who ARE the church) to offer our sacrifice of worship, regardless of whether we feel like it or not.

Like running – once per month will keep you at the same level, twice will help you grow in faith, three times even more - and so on.

The bible suggests that church should be our first priority on a Sunday, not competing with others things, but first.

And when we come, what do we bring? Do we come expecting entertainment? Distraction? Our consumer age makes us so prone to thinking in these terms, whereas the bible says we should come bringing expectant minds, open hearts, and a readiness to hear from God. Is that what we bring? Do we come active or passive?

## 2) Social Action – how am I showing God's love in practical ways to those around me?

Lord, 'when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

<sup>40</sup> "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

[Matthew 25]

There are many ways in which we can show God's love in practical ways. Have we thought lately about where we might give some time or energy to help others? We listed on our notice sheet recently all sorts of things which were needing help – are you the answer to your own prayers on any of them?

It may be that you are no longer physically able to help others, then which social action project do you support with your prayer, day by day, week by week, in an informed and focussed way?

### 3) Giving – when did I last review what I give to others?

Then Jesus said to them, “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.” And they were amazed at him. [Mark 12]

The bible suggests (in the Old Testament) a guideline of 10% of our income should go to God – known as a tithe. The Church of England suggests that 5% of our income should be given to church.

It’s sometimes easy to forget that ALL our money is God’s (... ‘all things come from you O Lord’ ...). So have we reviewed lately what we are giving to St Luke’s, to a charity of my choice, to the social action group I am praying for? How near 10% is my giving? Have I remembered St Luke’s in my will? What do I need to do to ensure that God is given what is due to him?