

40 Days for Healing Hunger

I'm just one person. What can I do about the problem of hunger? The food security crisis is so complex, so overwhelming, that I am paralyzed by its immensity. "It can't be done," I think. But there are many things you and I can do, and if every person of faith in North America would do some of these things, the world would move a long way toward healing hunger in the world. Try the things suggested in this calendar, and you will become an important part of the healing process.

7 Isaiah 1:15-17
Sponsor simpler meals at a meeting of your club, civic organization, church or business; give the savings to local feeding programs.

11 Matthew 25: 36, 43
Give sacrificially of your money, over and above your tithes through the church. Designate your gifts for relief and development through your denomination, or through other hunger organizations, like UNICEF (www.unicef.com).

14 Isaiah 3:13-15
Drink only water for one week. Most people don't have the luxury to choose what to drink. Many people don't even have access to water that's safe to drink.

1 Luke 9:10-17
Become informed. Read about the problem. Find out what the situation really is. Bring it to the attention of others.

4 Luke 1:46-55
Get your church to serve only rice and beans for a fellowship meal, and use that time to talk about hunger issues. Discuss what the Bible says about feeding the poor, and spend some time in prayer for hungry people.

8 Proverbs 14:21
Give more than money. Give your life. Look at the Volunteer Opportunities listing on the Seeds website (www.seedspublishers.org) for ideas about what you could do for a year or a few weeks.

12 1 Timothy 1:5
Use public transportation more. Encourage legislation to upgrade public transportation systems.

15 Luke 14:12-14
Eat more fresh vegetables and fruits; can or freeze produce at home. Buy from vegetable markets and stands.

2 Leviticus 23: 22
Order a *Children's Hunger Educational Kit*, for the children in your church or school, from the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP). It includes excellent resources from the PCP, Heifer Project International, World Food Day, Church World Service, and Bread for the World.

5 Psalm 41: 3
When you go grocery shopping, buy extra canned foods, peanut butter, or other staples for your local food pantry. Buy your favorites so that a hungry person can enjoy the foods that you do.

9 1 Cor. 4:9-13
Look a homeless person in the eye.

16 Job 5:1-16
Become more aware of how what you buy affects other people.
1. Look up information about fair trade (see www.fairtradefederation.org or www.sweatshops.org).
2. Find out if your church is involved in the Equal Exchange interfaith coffee program (see www.equalexchange.com).
3. Write to the Folger's, Maxwell House, and Nestle companies and urge them to give their farmers a decent price for their beans.

3 Micah 6:8
Pray for displaced persons from Liberia. Find out more about that country and what has been happening there.

6 Matthew 6: 25-34
Don't eat between meals today.

10 James 5:1-6
When it's someone's birthday, hold a "Gift of the Heart" party, in which guests bring items to go into school and health kits for children in Iraq or Afghanistan. For more information, call 800/297-1516 or see www.churchworldservice.org

13 Jeremiah 22:13-16
Pick one day a week during this forty days and fast on bread and water. Use meal times to meditate and pray for the world's hungry people.

17 Psalm 82:1-4
Reduce or eliminate consumption of "junk food." Oppose use of grains for brewing beer and whiskey. American breweries and distilleries use about 16,000 tons of grain a day, enough to feed 128 million people for an entire year.

18 Deut. 14:28 -15:11
Form lobby groups to study U.S. food policy and worldwide hunger problems. Sponsor meetings of concerned individuals to discuss the world hunger problem. Invite policymakers and government leaders to attend. For information, contact Bread for the World, 50 F St. NW, Suite 500; Washington, DC 20001; 1-800-82-BREAD; (fax) 202-639-9401; www.bread.org

25 Luke 19:9-10
Clean out your closet and give your good clothes you haven't worn in a while to a thrift store or clothing pantry.

29 1 Cor. 10:23-24
Set up a church-wide "recycling center," a collection point for glass and aluminum that can be reused. Such recycling can save up to 95 percent of the energy needed to make the product from natural sources.

33 2 Kings 4:42-45
Find out if your community has a CROP Walk to raise money for hunger causes. If so, get involved. If not, talk to people about organizing one. For more information, see the CROP Walk page at www.churchworldservice.org

34 1 Timothy 6:17-19
Volunteer to work at a soup kitchen and then sit down and talk to the guests.

38 Matthew 19:16-22
Use paper conservatively; use the back of all sheets. Collect and recycle newspapers. Use the money to buy seeds to start a community garden in a low-income area.

19 Ezekiel 18:5-9
Before you make any more jewelry purchases, find out more about conflict diamonds. (See www.onesky.ca/diamonds and www.amnestyusa.org.)

22 Proverbs 14:31
Learn more about the Iraqi people. How is long-term conflict affecting the levels of poverty, homelessness, and hunger in Iraq? Who is trying to help? Look up www.churchworldservice.org.

26 Isaiah 60: 4-5
Buy a meal, and, instead of eating it yourself, take it to a homeless person.

30 Isaiah 58:6-12
If you have a garden, plant a row for the poor. Give your extra produce to a soup kitchen.

35 Proverbs 16: 26
For one week, any time you have the urge to buy something to drink or eat that you don't benefit from nutritionally, (soft drinks, candy bars, ice cream cones, and fast food meals), don't buy those items and instead put that money away in a jar. At the end of the week, give the money to a hunger organization.

39 Matthew 25:34-40
Find out if your local restaurants and grocery stores give their extra food to feeding programs. If they don't, help them organize a food reclamation project.

20 Lamentations 1:11
Explain to someone that the average age of a homeless person in the U.S. is seven years.

23 Luke 16:19-31
Take a collection in your class and order the book *When Did I See You Hungry?* for your church. It has 250 powerful photos and moving meditations. If you order it online, you can get it for \$23.95 (St. Anthony Messenger Press, Order # 15022.)

27 Proverbs 19: 17
Pledge to donate several blankets to a homeless shelter every month this winter.

31 Mark 10: 23-27
Watch the video *Embracing the Leper: The Story of Amazon Relief*. To order for \$20, contact the San Damiano Foundation at PO Box 1794, Burbank, CA 91507; Phone: 818/563-1947; email: Straubgt@aol.com.

36 Luke 10:29-37
When your stomach growls, pray for the 834 million people in the world who are chronically malnourished.

40 Lamentations 3:40
Make a promise to yourself that you will begin to live every day in a way that will bring about the healing of hunger in the world.

21 Proverbs 11:2
Ask yourself this question: If Jesus went shopping with you, would your buying habits be any different?

24 Galatians 6: 7-10
Don't eat out for one month. Set aside the money that you normally would spend and give it to a local homeless shelter. Have a picnic during those times that you usually would eat out, or fix something at home and serve it by candlelight.

28 Romans 12:9-21
Pray for people who work in relief and development, especially in war-torn places.

32 Amos 8:4-7
Have one meal where you eat only brown rice and drink only water. That's it. And that's what many hungry people get to eat, and at least your water is clean. If you're more adventuresome, eat brown rice and water for all three meals in one day.

37 Luke 8: 4-8
The next time you see images of starving children on your television, don't change the channel.