

Forty Days to Better Understanding

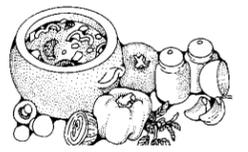
The folks at Seeds of Hope believe that authentic work towards healing hunger comes from an inner strength, which comes from spiritual disciplines. We also believe that a concerted effort, even by a small number of people, to observe a time of prayer together can make a huge difference in how we all face the problems of hunger and poverty. This forty-day calendar is designed to help you prepare spiritually for the work ahead of us. We challenge you to use the scriptures and suggestions on these two pages to make these forty days a holy season. —with blessings from the Seeds of Hope staff and Council of Stewards

1 Luke 9:10-17
Hunger News & Hope
 Become informed. Read *Hunger News & Hope*. (You can find it online at www.seedspublishers.org) Share what you have learned with others.

4 Luke 1:46-55
 Get a Bible commentary and look up all of the references to feeding the poor.



7 Isaiah 1:15-17
 Find out who's at risk for hunger in your community. (You can call a local food pantry or shelter, or contact a county agency.)

11 Matthew 25: 36, 43

 Eat more fresh vegetables and fruits; can or freeze produce at home. Buy from vegetable markets and stands.

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.

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
 Before you make any more jewelry purchases, find out more about conflict diamonds. (See www.onesky.ca/diamonds and www.amnestyusa.org.)

15 Luke 14:12-14
 Find the book *Radical hospitality* by Joseph Wakelee-Lynch and read it.

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
 Carry an extra apple or sandwich in your lunch or briefcase. Give it out when someone asks for money.

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
 When your stomach growls, pray for the 834 million people in the world who are chronically malnourished.



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 a group to study US food policy and worldwide hunger problems. 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

 Give one of your favorite garments to a thrift store or clothing program.

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
 Pray for people who work in relief and development, especially in war-torn places.

38 Matthew 19:16-22
 Order a copy of *Hunger for the Word: Lectionary Reflections on Food and Justice* (for Year A) by Larry Hollar—for yourself or for your pastor. If you order now, you will have it to begin using at Advent. You can find it at www.litpress.org.

19 Ezekiel 18:5-9
 Find a copy of *Food and Hunger*, the most recent issue of Christian Reflection: read about how history, art, photography, worship, scripture, and theology relate to food and hunger. Call 866-298-2325 or visit www.ChristianEthics.ws for a free copy.

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.



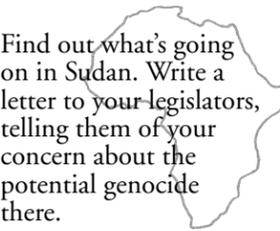
30 Isaiah 58:6-12
 If you have a garden, plant a row for the poor. Give your extra produce to a soup kitchen.

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
 Take a collection in your class and order the book or DVD *When Did I See You Hungry?* for your church. It has 250 powerful photos and moving meditations. Look for it and other compelling resources at www.sandamianofoundation.org.

23 Luke 16:19-31
 Find out what's going on in Sudan. Write a letter to your legislators, telling them of your concern about the potential genocide there.



27 Proverbs 19: 17
 Pledge to donate blankets, coats, gloves, and scarves to a homeless shelter before it gets cold this winter.

37 Mark 10: 23-27
 Volunteer to work at a soup kitchen and then sit down and talk to the guests.



36 Luke 10:29-37
 Use public transportation more. Encourage legislation to upgrade public transportation systems.

40 Lamentations 3:40

 Choose a time to go aside today and assess what you've learned about hunger and about yourself. Spend some time listening for God's leading. How can you stay in tune with this issue? What can you do over the next few months that will make a difference in your world?

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

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
 Go shopping with someone who uses food stamps, and watch how people treat him/her.

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.