

Lent: Asking for our daily bread

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Many years ago on a mission trip in Haiti, our group was ministering in the isolated mountains in the west near the Dominican Republic. The village where we stayed was where the road ended. To say it was a "road" was an exaggeration. Early one Sunday morning, we mounted horses and made our way to another village, even more remote, to worship with the believers there. We gathered with them in their sanctuary, a rectangular banana leaf hut. The worship was quite meaningful even though none of us understood Creole. Nevertheless, we didn't need to speak their language to know that God was being worshiped and Jesus was being glorified.

After worship we gathered at the pastor's house, a small hut, and we were served dinner. Some of us noticed that none of our Haitian brothers and sisters joined us, but for some reason we didn't think to ask. We ate a variety of foods and when we were finished, we were quite satisfied.

Later in the day when we were on our way back to the village of our temporary residence, the missionary who was hosting us told us something that made the rest of the trip quite quiet. He informed us that our Haitian brothers and sisters of the village had given up their daily meal, the food they had for that day, so that we could eat. They had given up their daily bread so that we could have ours.

Do we really understand what it means to ask God for our daily bread? We who have more bread than we need? Somewhere, I can't remember, Bishop William Willimon reminds us that most of us in the affluent West have more bread than we need. Indeed, more of us in the affluent West will die of too much bread rather than too little bread. How serious can we be when we pray each Sunday, "Give us this day our daily bread?"

I have no doubt when the brother in Christ in Haiti utters that line in prayer, it means something very

different from when I pray it. I am sure that when the sister in Jesus offers that request to God in Ethiopia, it is sincere in a way that I cannot fathom. When I say, as I do every Sunday along with the rest of the congregation, "Give us this day our daily bread," how desperate, and therefore, how sincere am I, in what I say?

Is it possible for me to understand what it means to ask God only for the bread I need for today, when I have bread in the freezer at home? Perhaps, when I ask God for my daily bread each week, such words should remind me of how I must give out of my abundance so that others, who pray the same words, will receive the bread they need just for the present day.

May I be so willing to give up my daily bread, so that others will receive theirs.

Originally posted [at Bevere's blog](#).