

Spiritual Disciplines

Bible Reading

Choosing to read scripture as a way to be transformed by its message and words.

Breath Prayer

The act of praying with the rhythm of one's breath. One choose a name for God, such as Shepherd or Creator, and a short prayer phrase, such as "grant me peace," or "guide my steps." On the inhale, one breaths the name for God and on the exhale, one prays the short prayer phrase. This is repeated over and over for several minutes and can be used many times in one day.

Confession

The practice of naming your wrong doings to trusted people who will pray with you and be spiritual allies.

Daily Examen

A process of reviewing one's day through a series of steps that include becoming aware of God's presence, reviewing the day with a sense of gratitude, paying attention to your emotions and experiences by asking a series of questions that walk you through your day, and looking toward tomorrow.

Exercise

The process of taking care of one's body through physical activity. Other disciplines can be incorporated with this one, such as breath prayer, mindfulness, or silence.

Fasting

Choosing to go without food, media, entertainment, or something else that serves to distract you for a time of intentional prayer. A fast may be partial or complete. If you choose to fast from food, consult a doctor first.

Gratitude

The practice of daily recognizing the things in life for which you can be thankful. You can do this by simply naming them to yourself each night or you may enjoy taking it on as a journaling discipline.

Lectio Divina

A discipline of reading scripture as if it is a living word that speaks to us, not something that should be studied. In the discipline, one reads slowly through the scripture four times, each time with a slightly different intent. The first is to simply read it and hear it, paying attention to what stands out. The second is to meditate on the word or phrase that seemed to be the most important. After the third reading, the one practicing prays about the experiences, and after the fourth reading, the one practicing contemplates the experience.

Mindfulness

This is the practice of paying attention to the activity at hand. It is the practice of not multi-tasking, but rather giving one's full attention to one activity. Whether you are eating, talking with a friend, paying bills, preparing for a presentation at work, or tucking your kids in at night, this practice calls you to fully experience the thing you are doing. Pay attention to how you feel physically and emotionally, what you smell, hear, and taste. As we learn to more fully experience individual activities in our lives, we will more fully experience the life that we are living.

Prayer

The practice of conversing with God about your concerns and joys. The practice includes periods of silence in which you seek to sense God's guidance.

Service

The practice of using your time and your gifts to serve others in your family, at your church, and in your community. This can include anything from doing hard labor, to sitting with hospital patient, sharing your artistic abilities as an expression of honoring God.

Silence

Choose to place one self in a quiet space and to not speak for an extended period of time in order to seek God. You may choose to practice this in your daily life if you can manage to go without speaking, but is often easier to practice in a retreat away.

Simplicity

Choosing to consume less and to get rid of things that are keeping you from living a full life. This may include material possessions, destructive habits, and harmful relationships.

Solitude

Choosing to refrain from interacting and being with other people in order to be alone with God.

Soul Friendship

Engaging a friend and fellow follower of Jesus in prayerful conversation or other spiritual practices.

Worship

The practice of recognizing and praising God's goodness, and beauty in words, music, ritual, or silence. This may be done in community or in solitude.