

Going Further – Resources

Recommended Book:

(Available to check out from the church library)

Celebration of Discipline (by Richard J. Foster): the *Celebration of Discipline* explores the “classic disciplines,” or central spiritual practices, of the Christian faith. Along the way, Foster shows that it is by and through these practices that the path to spiritual growth can be found.

The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives (by Dallas Willard): discover a way of living that enables ordinary men and women to enjoy the fruit of the Christian life. Dallas Willard reveals how the key to self-transformation resides in the practice of the spiritual disciplines, and how their practice affirms human life to the fullest.

Faith @ Home

Blueprints

**Practicing
Spiritual
Disciplines**

Practicing Spiritual Disciplines

From Mark Spence, Satellite Campus Pastor

If you've ever been in church, you've probably heard verses in the Bible that reference spiritual disciplines. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians that we are to pray without ceasing. David in Psalm 1 tells us that we are to meditate on God's word day and night. Pray without ceasing. Read the Bible day and night. Thanks a lot Paul. Thanks a lot David.

Let's face it – spiritual disciplines can be intimidating. These two passages may lead you to believe that spiritual disciplines require volumes of your time or are only for the über-spiritual. Richard Foster, author of the *Celebration of Discipline* places spiritual disciplines in perspective.

“We must not be led to believe that the disciplines are only for spiritual giants...Far from it. God intends the disciplines of the spiritual life to be for ordinary human beings: people who have jobs, who care for children, who wash dishes and mow lawns.”

In other words, spiritual disciplines are not just for “spiritual giants.” Instead, every day Joes like you and me are capable of applying spiritual disciplines in our life.

We just need to learn how.

STEP ONE: Discover the spiritual disciplines

I already mentioned two spiritual disciplines, prayer and Bible study. The exact number and description of spiritual disciplines differ with each book that is published about spiritual disciplines, but we can easily discern several common spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, service, Bible study, and meditation.

If you are not regularly practicing the spiritual disciplines or are unfamiliar with them, I encourage you to read one of the two “Going Further Resources” found on the back of this Blue Print. Begin by choosing and putting into practice one of the spiritual disciplines. Don't try to run a marathon before learning to walk.

STEP TWO: Carve out time

Contrary to popular belief, there is no one “spiritual” time of the day. Your schedule is unique to you and it is important for you to find your best time of the day to practice spiritual disciplines. For example, I practice spiritual disciplines, such as study and prayer, in the evening before bedtime. For a stay-at-home mom, this may be when the children are napping. Others might find that the best time is early in the morning. What matters most is finding a consistent time in your schedule that you can devote to spiritual disciplines.

STEP THREE: Don't throw in the towel

Spiritual disciplines require exactly what they imply, discipline. It is not easy to develop discipline nor is it a quick process. If you miss a few days, don't panic and give up. Discipline requires time to develop into a habit. Spiritual disciplines are worth taking the time, even if that time is only a small portion of your day.

Additionally, there are seasons of life in which you have more time in your schedule to devote to the practice of spiritual disciplines. As you progress through life, don't allow change to derail your discipline.

As God's people, we will be richly rewarded in the practice of spiritual disciplines because we will grow closer in our relationship with Christ. When we do not develop these disciplines, we miss out on enriching the greatest relationship that we have our relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.