



Spiritual Practices

Developed by our leaders, these spiritual practices serve as a reminder of what we may enjoy in our life of faith. It is our hope over the years of following Jesus that these disciplines, experiences and knowledge will help shape our character and unite the people of Deerbrook Covenant Church. It is by grace that we know God and follow his Son and by his Spirit that we become more like Jesus.

Life Transforming Faith

Definition: *Having a personal relationship with God the Father, Jesus & the Holy Spirit. Embracing the core beliefs of Christian faith for the purpose of life transformation.*

Relevant Scripture:

John 1:1-18

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

John 16:1-15

Colossians 1:15-20

Suggested study:

Mere Christianity (1952) by C.S. Lewis

On-going Practice/Spiritual Disciplines:

1. A vibrant growing devotional life to develop your faith with Jesus is key.
2. Join a Christian fellowship (congregation, para-church or support group).
3. Seek to become more like Christ by obeying his commands. Study his life & teaching, turning to him daily.

Suggested experiences:

- Pray and ask Jesus into your heart as Lord & Savior, confessing & repenting of your sins.
- Attend an 'introduction to Christianity' class or small group.
- Attend a retreat to explore spiritual practices & disciplines.



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Formed by God's Word

Definition: *Consistent discovery & personal formation from study of the Bible.*

Relevant Scripture:

Psalm 119:11

Hebrews 4:12

2 Timothy 3:16

Suggested study:

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth (2014, 4th edition)
by Gordon D. Fee et al.

On-going Practice/Spiritual Disciplines:

1. Regularly attend worship service to hear the Word.
2. Regularly participating in a small group as a primary way to apply Scripture in your life.
3. Regularly practice personal Bible study to become more like Christ including memorization and meditation upon Scripture. Set goals of regular reading.

Suggested experiences:

- Take part in in a Bible overview learning experience that helps piece together the “big story” of salvation history.
- Learn about the different kinds of Biblical literature and how to interpret Scripture accordingly.
- Experience *Lectio Divina* retreat or workshop.



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A Prayerful Life

Definition: *Daily communication with & dependence on our Heavenly Father.*

Relevant Scripture:

2 Chronicles 7:14

Romans 12:12

Matthew 6:9-13

Suggested study:

Prayer by Richard Foster (2003)

On-going Practice/Spiritual Disciplines:

1. Practice 'giving heartfelt thanks to God' for every meal.
2. Consistently pray with family members at a particular time of day.
3. Create a special place/location where you regularly meet with God.
4. Use a journal or prayer list to record your prayers, topics and concerns.
5. Begin with adoration, confession, thanksgiving and finally requests.

Suggested experiences:

- Occasionally, set aside a good amount of time for fasting and prayer.
- Participate in a 24-7 prayer experience.
- Watch the movie *War Room* with a group friends.
- Connect with a prayer partner, to 'bear your soul before God.'



- Create experiences to listen for God's voice.
- Experience praying the Psalms.

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Authentic Worship

Definition: Regularly experiencing God and celebrating who he is and what he has done with joyful praise.

Relevant Scripture:

Matthew 6:33

Psalms 33:3

Matthew 18:20

Suggested study:

Jesus Calling (2004) by Sarah Young

On-going Practice/Spiritual Disciplines:

1. *Private:* Consistent devotional time with the Lord. Develop a time of prayer, worship, study, journal, stillness & quiet.
2. *Public:* Consistent participation in corporate worship.
3. Fill your world with worship music, lyrics & videos. Discover Christian songs that stir your heart and listen to them often.

Suggested experiences:

- *Be creative:* play an instrument, create artwork, write a song or poem of worship.
- *Rejoice in the Lord:* create/ find a place to sing & express your love for God. Seek the presence of the Lord with a grateful inspired heart.
- *Be courageous:* seek & find a small group, congregation & worship events (*IHOP* etc.) to experience uninhibited praise.



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Connected to Community

Definition: Encouraging one another to spiritual & personal growth. Caring for each other by courageously engaging in authentic Christian community.

Relevant Scripture:

Psalms 119:63, 133:1 Acts 2:41-47 Philippians 2:1-4
Colossians 3:12-17 Hebrews 10:24-25

Suggested study:

Life Together, *The Classic Exploration of Christian Community (1954)* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

On-going Practice/Spiritual Disciplines:

1. Join (or create) a small group of believers who meet regularly. Based on the group study scripture, share a meal, discuss your challenges and pray for one another.
2. Pursue a 1-to-1 relationship with a friend; confess sins, pray and support one another.
3. Do a study of the New Testament 'One Another' passages.

Suggested experiences:

- *Be ready:* pray to experience your friends & neighbors as people to be known & loved.
- *Be courageous:* step out your comfort zone and begin meeting with others. Take the lead as the opportunity arises, as trust grows, share your authentic self.
- *Be available:* attend family camp or a conference aimed at your age group or life situation.
- *Be fun:* say 'yes' to multiple opportunities for experiences with others; i.e. meals, walks, adventure, events and gatherings.



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Awareness: God, Self & Others

Definition: A maturing mindfulness – to know & love the true living God, to understand & accept oneself and to appreciate & value others.

Relevant Scripture:

Psalm 42:1-5, Psalm 139, Isaiah 43:1-13

Mark 12:28-31, Luke 10:30-37, John 14:6-14

1 Corinthians 13:1-13, Galatians 5:6, Col. 1:13-23

Suggested study:

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality (updated edition 2017)

by Peter Scarzzero

On-going Practice/Spiritual Disciplines:

1. Develop a 'Rule of Life', your own practices & rhythms to become more like Jesus.
2. Practice 'the presence of God' (walks, scripture memory & meditation, listening prayers.)
3. Spend 30 days praying the names of God
(www.navigators.org/resource/praying-names-attributes-God)
4. Explore the various personality theories: *DISC, Myers-Briggs, StrengthFinders, Enneagram, etc.*
5. Become aware of the gifts of the Spirit, and how God has uniquely created you.



Suggested experiences:

- Participate in a short-term mission into another culture.
- Be a volunteer with a ministry i.e. local thrift store, food pantry (*Coldwater*), Urban ministry (*Freedom Fire in KC*).
- Live with a sincere interest in knowing & serving others, learn their story.
- Regularly take a spiritual retreat or undergo spiritual direction.
- Expand your mind: read/listen to authors of different race, gender, age and perspective.

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Exhibiting the Fruit of the Spirit

Definition: *Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control as a way of life.*

Relevant Scripture:

Galatians 5:19-26

Mark 8:34-37

Suggested study:

Living on the Vine (1999) by Philip Kennison

On-going Practice/Spiritual Disciplines:

1. Consider how God is asking you to 'give up your life' and 'carry your cross.' How can you put others first?
2. From Kennison's book, read & discuss the reflection questions & practical suggestions at the end of each chapter. Where is God asking you to grow?
3. Work through the fruit, highlighting one fruit each month for study, reflection and action. Keep a journey of your success and challenges.

Suggested experiences:

- Have an open & honest conversation with your closest friends and family members. How do they see you living & needing to grow in 'exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit?'
- With a prepared & humble heart, pursue reconciliation with those who have hurt you, or who are estranged with you.



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Sacrificial Service

Definition: *Unselfishly living for & serving others out of humility, compassion & gratitude - understanding the grace that we have received in Christ.*

Relevant Scripture

Matthew 22:37-40

Romans 12:10-16

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

Mark 10:45

Phil. 2:5-11

Galatians 5:13

Suggested study:

Improving Your Serve, The Art of Unselfish Living by
Chuck Swindoll (1981)

On-going Practice/Spiritual Disciplines:

1. Pray God will open doors for you to serve others with the 'mind of Christ' as a humble servant.
2. Seek & say yes to opportunities to help others (family, neighbors, colleagues, strangers) who cannot pay you back.
3. Be a generous person. Give freely of your income, time and skills to sacrificially bless others with the blessing you have received from God.

Suggested experiences:

- Evaluate your spiritual gifts, passions, abilities, personality and experiences through the Network book or in conversation with others or an online assessment.



Leading Others to Jesus

Definition: *Intentional effort to bring others to faith in Jesus, spreading the Gospel of Christ.*

Relevant Scripture

Matthew 28:18-20

Acts 1:8

John 3:16, 20:30-31

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

1 Peter 3:15

“Romans Road” **Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, 10:9, 8:1**

Suggested study:

The Reason for God, Belief in the Age of Skepticism by
Tim Keller (2009)

On-going Practice/Spiritual Disciplines:

1. Write-out and practice your testimony of coming to faith in Jesus in 1, 3, and 10-minute versions. *Who were you? How were you led to faith? How is your walk with Christ?*
2. Solidify your ability to clearly share the Gospel (i.e. *Romans Road, The Bridge Diagram*)
3. Consistently pray for opportunities to share about faith in Jesus. Daily look for opportunities to ask others spiritual questions. Pray for and offer to pray *with* people.

Suggested experiences:

- Download the Covenant BLESS journal. Begin with prayer for your friends to know Jesus. Engage them naturally over coffee or a meal. Listen well. Ask questions about their spiritual thoughts, serve your neighbors and share the good news of Jesus.



- Volunteer with children and youth ministry as a teacher of the Gospel.

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Heart of Compassion, Mercy & Justice

Definition: *To embrace God's heart for the poor & oppressed, making a commitment to work for mercy and justice for others.*

Relevant Scripture

Isaiah 61

Zechariah 7:8-10

Luke 4:18-19

Matthew 25:31-46

Suggested Study

When Helping Hurts: *How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor...and Yourself* by Steve Corbet & Brian Fikkert (2012 edition)

On-going Practice/Spiritual Disciplines

1. Actively pray for and pursue racial reconciliation and justice in our society.
2. Sacrificially serve in a ministry of compassion and mercy across cultural or economic lines (i.e. Freedom Fire KC).
3. Cultivate friends and/or attend worship services in churches of different racial/ethnic compositions.

Suggested Experiences

- Take a short-term mission trip in a developing country.
- Volunteer to tutor an hour a week with *The Tutoring Club@Deerbrook* during the school year.
- Speak up in the presence of racist remarks and behavior.
- Research resources available to <https://covchurch.org/mercy-justice>



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Overcoming the World

Definition: *Being God's light in the darkness, we transform our communities through God's grace & power. Living victoriously, overcoming personal and societal issues.*

Relevant Scripture:

Romans 12:1-2

1 John 2:15-17

Hosea 4:1-3

Sinful Nature vs. Spiritual Nature

Mark 7:21-22, Gal 5:19-25, Col 3:5-10

Suggested study:

Live No Lies *"Recognize & Resist the Three Enemies that Sabotage Your Peace"* by John Mark Comer (2021)

On-going Practice/Spiritual Disciplines:

1. Evaluate your thoughts, words & actions in light of God's Word. Engage in the battle for your heart, mind, family and our society.
2. Meet weekly with a small group or accountability partner for conversations about life issues & personal struggles.
3. Examine how you fill your free time (entertainment, music, podcasts & social media). What edifies your soul and bring about the character God desires?

Suggested experiences:

- Pursue conversations and experiences with people different than yourself.
- Consider counseling or joining a support group to overcome personal struggles or anxiety.



- Determine where God may be calling you to work for transformation of society through activism, prayer or compassion.
- Examine the curriculum from Center for Faith, Sexuality & Gender <https://www.centerforfaith.com/> by Preston Sprinkle, for discussion of the greatest battle for our culture.

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Discipleship: Helping others follow Christ

Definition: *A mature Christian helping others follow Christ with intentional life-on-life discipleship.*

Relevant Scripture

Matthew 22:35-40; 28:16-20

1 Thess. 3:2-3

2 Peter 1:3-11

Luke 15 (parables)

2 Timothy 2:15, 22

Suggested study:

High Quest Series for Men & Women by Ron & Mary Bennett

On-going Practice/Spiritual Disciplines:

1. Pray and seek out a mentor who can help you grow in faith and obedience. Meet regularly with them.
2. Pray and seek out a person or two that you can mentor in faith and obedience. Meet regularly with them.
3. Practice & share with others the many different spiritual disciplines.

Suggested experiences:

- Participate in a Weekly discipleship groups (2-3 people) for the seasons of more intense maturing.
- As a member of a discipleship groups of a larger size...make sure someone *knows* you and can encourage you on your journey as Jesus's disciple.



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Spiritual Practices As we walk in faith and share life together in community, we experience spiritual growth. These are life-long transforming practices of our heart, mind & behavior that Deerbrook teaches. Growth happens as God’s Spirit leads us to be more like Christ with an increasing love for God & others.

BRING <i>Life changing walk with God</i>	EQUIP <i>Compelling community</i>	SEND <i>Impacting our World</i>
<p>Life Transforming Faith <i>Having a personal relationship with God the Father, Jesus & the Holy Spirit.</i></p> <p>Formed by God’s Word <i>Consistent discovery & personal formation from study of the Bible.</i></p>	<p>Connected to Community <i>Encouraging & caring for each other by courageously engaging in authentic Christian community.</i></p> <p>Awareness: God, Self & Others <i>To know & love the true living God, to understand & accept myself, appreciate & value others.</i></p>	<p>Leading Others to Jesus <i>Intentional effort to bring others to faith in Jesus by spreading the Gospel of Christ.</i></p> <p>Heart of Compassion, Mercy & Justice <i>Embracing God’s heart for the poor & oppressed, making a commitment to mercy and justice.</i></p>
<p>A Prayerful Life <i>Daily communication with & dependence on our Father.</i></p> <p>Authentic Worship <i>Regularly experiencing & celebration who God is and what He has done with joyful praise.</i></p>	<p>Exhibiting the Fruit of the Spirit <i>Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness & self-control – as a way of life.</i></p> <p>Sacrificial Service <i>Living for & serving others out of humility, compassion & gratitude -understanding the grace we have received in Christ.</i></p>	<p>Overcoming the World <i>As God’s light in the darkness, we transform our communities through God’s grace & power. Living victoriously.</i></p> <p>Discipleship: Helping others follow Christ <i>As a mature Christian helping others follow Christ with intentional life-on-life discipleship.</i></p>
<p><u>The Covenant affirmations:</u></p>		
<p><i>The centrality of the word of God</i></p>	<p><i>The Church is a fellowship of believers</i></p>	<p><i>The whole mission of the Church</i></p>
<p><i>The necessity of new birth</i></p>	<p><i>The work of the Holy Spirit</i></p>	<p><i>Freedom in Christ</i></p>

Comprehensive suggested resources list:

Life Transforming Faith

1. ***Mere Christianity*** (1952) by C.S. Lewis
2. ***The Apostle's Creed***
3. ***Forgotten God*** (2009) by Francis Chan
4. ***Sacred Rhythms*** (2006) by Ruth Haley Barton

Formed by God's Word

1. ***How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*** (2014, 4th edition) by Gordon D. Fee et al.
2. ***Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading*** (2009) by Eugene Peterson
3. ***Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting & Applying the Bible*** (2012) by J. Scott Duvall

A Prayerful Life

1. ***Prayer*** by Richard Foster (2003)
2. ***Prayer*** by Tim Keller (2016)
3. ***Growing in Prayer Devotional, 100 day Journey*** (2019) by Mike Bickel
4. ***How to Pray, A Simple Guide for Normal People*** (2019) by Peter Greig

Authentic Worship

1. ***Jesus Calling*** (2004) by Sarah Young
2. The book of ***PSALMS***. 150 songs of Hebrew worship with all the emotions of a walk with God.
3. ***The Vineyard Discipleship Guides: Volume 1: Experience and Worship God, Partner with the Holy Spirit*** (second edition, 2017) by Dr. Robert E. Logan

Connected to Community

1. **Life Together**, *The Classic Exploration of Christian Community* (1954) by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
2. **The Connecting Church** (2001) by Randy Frazee
3. **The Purpose Driven Life** (2002) by Rick Warren (*days #15 - #21, 'Formed for God's Family'*)

Awareness: God, Self & Others

1. **Emotionally Healthy Spirituality** (*updated edition 2017*) by Peter Scarzzero
2. **Knowing God** (1993) by J.I. Packer
3. **The Road Back to You** (*Enneagram Journey to Self-Discovery*) (2016) by Ian Morgan Corn & Suzanne Stabile
4. **Boundaries** (1992) by Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend

Exhibiting the Fruit of the Spirit

1. **Living on the Vine** (1999) by Philip Kennison
2. **The Peacemaker, Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict** (2004) by Ken Sande
3. **How To Have That Difficult Conversation You've Been Avoiding: With Your Spouse, Adult Child, Boss, Coworker, Best Friend, Parent, Or Someone You're Dating** (2005) by Henry Cloud & John Townsend

Sacrificial Service

1. **Improving Your Serve, The Art of Unselfish Living** by Chuck Swindoll (1981)
2. **A Long Obedience in the Same Direction, Discipleship in an Instant Society** by Eugene Peterson (2000)
3. **Discover Your Spiritual Gifts the Network Way** by Bruce Bugbee (2004)

Leading Others to Christ

1. ***The Reason for God, Belief in the Age of Skepticism*** by Tim Keller (2009) [Addressing many of today's most relevant objections to faith.]
2. ***Questioning Evangelism*** by Randy Newman (2017) [Engaging people's heart like Jesus did.]
3. ***BLESS resources*** from the Covenant church.
<https://covchurch.org/make-and-deepen-disciples/intentional-evangelism/> [Helpful steps to sharing with friends.]

Heart of Compassion, Mercy and Justice

1. ***When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor...and Yourself*** by Steve Corbet & Brian Fikkert
2. ***Welcoming Justice: God's Movement Toward Beloved Community*** by Charles March & John M. Perkins
3. Wide variety of Covenant Resource Papers
<https://covchurch.org/topic/love-mercy-do-justice/> including "The Evangelical Covenant Church and The Ministry of Compassion, Mercy, and Justice" <https://covchurch.org/resource/respondingfaithfully/>

Overcoming the World

1. ***Radical, Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream*** (2010) by David Platt
2. ***Money, Sex & Power The challenge of the disciplined life*** (1985) by Richard Foster
3. ***Culture Shock A Biblical Response to Today's Most Divisive Issues"*** by Chip Ingram (2015)

Discipleship: Helping Others Follow Jesus

1. ***High Quest Series for Men & Women*** by Ron & Mary Bennett
2. ***Beginning the Walk*** (2018) by Ron & Mary Bennett
3. ***Celebration of Discipline*** (1980) by Richard Foster
4. ***Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life*** (1996) by Donald Whitney
5. ***Don't Waste Your Life*** (1994) by John Piper