SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

When we become Christians, we have to develop our faith over time. There are spiritual disciplines that help us become stronger in our faith. Unlike the spiritual gifts, which are provided to us by the Holy Spirit, spiritual disciplines are more like finely honed tools that aid us in our spiritual walks. Yet each of the spiritual disciplines takes time to develop and effort to incorporate into our daily lives.

How Do Spiritual Disciplines Work?

A spiritual discipline is a good habit that allows you to remain open to God and develop yourself spiritually. Discipline is one of the hardest things for us to learn. Think of some of our finest athletes. Most of them have a strong sense of discipline, because they have to build up strength, endurance, and skill to be good at a particular sport. Surgeons spend years developing their surgical skills and learning the human body so that they are able to skillfully fix what is malfunctioning in the body. Our favorite writers have the discipline to sit down every day to write, edit, and re-write until the story is right. They hone their language skills and their ability to see a final product in all of the chaos of storytelling.

That's what spiritual disciplines are to our faith.

Spiritual disciplines exercise our spirit, mind, and emotions so that we become closer to God. They help us see His will for our lives more clearly so that we can live the life He desires for us. The more we practice these disciplines, the better we get at them, and the stronger we make our faith.

Spiritual Disciplines Make It Simple

Spiritual disciplines also help us simplify our faith. How often do we just feel discouraged because we don't quite know what to do or if our decisions are right or not? Spiritual disciplines have a way of clearing out the superfluous things so we can just get back to basics. Sometimes we just overcomplicate things, and spiritual disciplines can keep us from making our spiritual lives more difficult.
By practicing spiritual disciplines we also keep our eyes on God more often. When we focus on God, we stop letting other things get in our way or cloud our vision. Our lives find a clarity when we become more disciplined in our faith.

**Types of Spiritual Disciplines**

There are two types of spiritual disciplines - those that are personal and those that are corporate. The personal disciplines are those that each individual should develop for him or herself, while the corporate disciplines are one that the entire church body can do together.

**Personal Disciplines**

Meditation  
Prayer  
Fasting  
Bible Study  
External Disciplines  
Evangelism  
Service  
Simplicity  
Stewardship  
Solitude  
Submission  
Celebration  
Confession  
Seeking Guidance  
Worship
Becoming more disciplined in our faith is a good thing, as long as those disciplines are handled responsibly. Sometimes we can get more caught up in developing the disciplines themselves so we lose sight of why we started developing our discipline in the first place. When it becomes more about memorizing verses than learning what they mean or when it becomes more about the fast than talking to God in our times of sacrifice, we're not using our disciplines to really develop our faith.

Also, when we feel we cannot possibly be good enough Christians without those disciplines, then we lose sight of what spiritual disciplines are supposed to do. Instead, spiritual disciplines become more like superstitions. Like a baseball player that has to wear the same socks game after game or he thinks he'll lose, sometimes we rely too much on our spiritual habits rather than keeping our eyes on God.
SPIRITUAL PRACTICES EXPERIMENT

Experience Timeline: Every Day from February 8th to February 21st

Experiment: Pick a spiritual practice to commit to doing on a daily basis.

Name:

The Spiritual Practice I choose was:

The reason I choose this Spiritual Practice was:

How did you experience the presence or absence of God through your spiritual practice?

What was your expectation for God’s presence in this experiment?