



SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

The Spiritual Disciplines and Community

SESSION #5

God intends for believers to _____ as
_____ of His grace through the mutual
ministry of _____ and _____.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Hebrews 10:24-25

*“Let us **consider** how to **stir up one another** to love and good works, **not neglecting to meet together**, as is the habit of some, but **encouraging one another**, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”*

Pray

Plan

Provoke

EXHORTATION

Hebrews 3:13

*But **exhort one another** every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*

WHY IS THIS CRITICAL?

1. It guards against _____
_____.
2. It recalibrates your _____ of your own spirituality.
3. It fulfills a primary function of how God has _____ His Body to be _____.

11 WAYS TO ENGAGE OTHERS

1. Ordinary people, ordinary ways. Loving people can require extraordinary effort, but it doesn't require extraordinary gifting. Talk to people. Get to know them. Be a good listener. God has given you wisdom. He's given you his Spirit. Don't be afraid.

2. Start small and push through the awkwardness. I used to disdain so much small talk in the church, until a seasoned pastor reminded me that most people have to wade in the shallow end before they'll try swimming in the deep. Except for the most extroverted among us, getting to know people is challenging. But Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither are friendships. Keep your hand to the relational plow.

3. Follow the affections. Facts are important too. But don't just ask about the test results and the medication and the next doctor's visit. We must be willing to talk about fears and worries and doubts and joys and hopes and disappointments.

4. See, and let them know you see. “See something, say something” is not just good advice for stopping the bad guys. It’s good advice for pointing out the good in other people. Have you noticed the Spirit’s gifts, or better yet the Spirit’s fruit, in someone else? Write him a note. Tell her what you’re thankful for.

5. Draw out and ask for stories. How did you become a Christian? What drew you to your line of work? Tell me about your kids. How did you two meet? What were your traditions around the holidays? One of the greatest gifts you can give to others is the gift of your curiosity.

6. Speak from the heart and remember. Don’t let suffering scare you away. That’s when others need you the most. Don’t lecture. Don’t push them away with pious platitudes. Tell them you’re sorry. Take the initiative to help. Don’t forget.

7. Pray and follow up. I always find it amazing (and encouraging) that so many people will pray for me in a time of crisis or pain. I find it doubly amazing when those people circle back a week later, or a month later, or a year later, and tell me they are still praying and ask how I am doing.

8. Keep in mind, suffering is a battleground. We don’t just experience life. We all interpret what we experience. When suffering comes—and it comes to all of us—we will be tempted to interpret our pain incorrectly (e.g., God is out to get me, I’m unlucky, nothing really matters). We need each other to suffer well.

9. Exercise patience and humility. Real love means getting into real problems. Most people, however, prefer to talk about their circumstantial problems, not their real problems. So if we are going to love one another, we must deal humbly with other people’s anger and other people’s failures.

10. Have the courage to confront. Love may cover a multitude of sins, but it does not overlook every sin for all time. Sin is one of the main things we all have in common. Let’s not be afraid to talk about it.

11. Deal with past, present, and future. It’s easy for us to relate to people only in the present. What’s going on today? How are you feeling right now? But wise counselors will also look into the past (to see how history has affected our interpretation of reality) and bring the future to bear on the present. Christians of all people must live in light of the end of the story.

Kevin DeYoung’s chapter summaries of Ed Welch’s book, *Side by Side*. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/eleven-ways-christians-can-love-one-another/>

Course Outline

Week 1: Meeting with God through Spiritual Disciplines

Week 2: The Spiritual Discipline of Bible Intake

Week 3: The Spiritual Discipline of Prayer

Week 4: The Spiritual Discipline of Biblical Meditation

Week 5: The Spiritual Disciplines and Community

Questions?

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Suggested Reading

Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life (Donald Whitney)

Habits of Grace (David Mathis)

Handbook to Prayer (Kenneth Boa)