

The Inward Disciplines:

Avenues for self-reflection, quiet contemplation, growth, and renewal



MEDITATION



PRAYER



FASTING



STUDY

(Adapted from Celebration of Discipline Resource Guide by Richard Foster)

“Joy is the keynote of all the Disciplines. The purpose of the Disciplines is liberation from the stifling slavery to self-interest and fear.... The primary requirement is a longing after God.” - Richard J. Foster

MEDITATION:

“The purpose of meditation is to enable us to hear God more clearly. Meditation is listening, sensing, and heeding the life and light of Christ.” - Richard J. Foster

- We meditate to quiet our own voice and hear God’s voice and obey his words.
- Meditation is a listening to God, reflecting on what we hear, and bringing God into our whole lives.
- Reflecting on Scripture and nature can open this process.
- Meditation can become like a prism for reflecting insights from God.

PRAYER:

“True, whole prayer is nothing but love.” - St. Augustine

- Prayer is not a chore but a gift of love between God and us.
- Prayer is not techniques, but about a love relationship that God longs to have with us.
- Prayer is the primary way of enjoying the “with-God life.”
- There are many ways to pray and different prayers to use.
- Intercessory prayer occurs when we love people enough to desire far more for them than we have the power to give, and this desire leads us to prayer.

FASTING:

"Fasting reveals the things that control us... We are not so much abstaining from food as we are feasting on the word of God. Fasting is feasting!" - Richard J. Foster

- Fasting is the voluntary denial of food for the sake of intense spiritual activity.
- Fasting is not to lose weight—not for vanity.
- Fasting makes us more keenly sensitive to the whole of life, so that we do not become obsessed with our consumer mentality.
- We learn as much about the Discipline of fasting through our failures to be able to follow through with fasting as through our successes.
- Fasting reminds us of our need to live dependently upon God.

STUDY:

"The purpose of the Spiritual Disciplines is the total transformation of the person. They aim at replacing old destructive habits of thought with new life-giving habits. Nowhere is this purpose more clearly seen than in the Discipline of study." - Richard J. Foster

- We study scripture to understand who God is, what God is like, and how God works with his children.
- Study ought to be a normal part of life for all Christians, not so much to amass knowledge but to come to a closer relationship with Jesus.
- It is the Holy Spirit who illuminates Scripture for us as we study.
- These are four steps to study:
 1. Repetition—repeated exposure.
 2. Concentration—focus, intensity, and intentionality.
 3. Comprehension—the "aha" of deep understanding.
 4. Reflection—considering the significance of what we are studying.
- We study the Bible, but also nature, human experience, and other good Christian teachers.

***Go to www.egracechurch.com for resources on how to begin practicing
The Inward Disciplines listed here.***