

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Spiritual Leadership Leader's Guide

LEADERSHIP LIFESTYLE LESSON 1: PERSONAL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module titled Leadership Lifestyle. The lessons examine the practical and spiritual requirements for those in Christian leadership. Being a leader is so much more than standing up in front of a group of people asking them to follow you! To be a great leader, one must maintain high standards in both public and private life. While every one of us struggles in many ways, a leader faces unique challenges. This module identifies some of these struggles and how to combat them, with practical advice from men and women who have experienced the trials and joys of following God's calling in leadership. Each lesson concludes with a Leader to Leader page. It features quotes from historical Christians, current Christian leaders, and people (not in leadership) who share their perspective on the topic.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is Christians who are maturing in their faith and desiring to serve God. The lessons will be especially helpful to those who are pastors, church leaders, mentors or teachers, but also anyone wishing to grow in their relationship with God.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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LEADERSHIP LIFESTYLE

LESSON 1: PERSONAL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

PURPOSE

This lesson looks at the personal spiritual disciplines that will enable you to effectively lead others, as well as sustain you in times of difficulty.

LEADER'S NOTE

This lesson applies to every Christian regardless of how young or old they are in the faith. It does, however, particularly relate to those in Christian leadership. Leadership requires preparation and on-going discipline. Even though some people seem to be born leaders and have the personality and character traits that set them apart for that role, they still require preparation in their particular field. They must also be disciplined and focused. This involves connecting with God daily through reading and studying His Word, worshiping God and asking for His guidance and strength, praying for those they are leading, and keeping one's life pure. What is true for church leaders is true for every Christian. In studying this lesson, be sure to present it not only as theory, but also as practical advice for each individual to follow. Every Christian should establish these disciplines as a vital part of their daily life.

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.

- ❖ What do you do regularly to help your body stay healthy?
- ❖ Do you know any athletes? How does their physical fitness regimen differ from yours?
- ❖ If you were to run 5 kilometers every morning, how would it positively affect your wellbeing? How would it impact your energy level, overall health, your diet, your relationships, etc.?
- ❖ How are spiritual disciplines similar to physical fitness workouts? How are the two different?
- ❖ What are some regular activities you engage in that promote your spiritual health? How often do you consider your spiritual health?



STUDY

Instruct the group on the following points.

TEACH:

- ❖ **Training that is of Greater Value:** Most people will never become a world-class athlete, but all would agree that a little exercise is good for our bodies. As adults, we rarely exercise just because it is fun; we usually do it in order to feel better or be able to participate in a sport. Every Christian needs spiritual disciplines; they are the exercises that allow us to grow in godliness, and are certainly necessary for anyone in leadership!
 - The book of 1 Timothy was written by the Apostle Paul to a young church leader named Timothy. In it, Paul encouraged Timothy to be an example to others and pursue excellence in the faith.
 - Read 1 Timothy 4:6-16. It tells us that while bodily training (exercise, rehearsing dance, practising a sport, or training to run long distances) is of limited value, godliness is of far greater worth.
 - **Spiritual disciplines are the means by which we train ourselves for godliness, and the intentional actions we take to depend on God for our deepest needs.**
 - **The Purpose of Spiritual Disciplines:** Realize that our salvation is not achieved through participation in spiritual disciplines, but rather it is by God's grace, through putting our faith in Christ, that we are saved. The purpose of engaging in spiritual disciplines is to help us grow and strengthen us in our Christian faith. (Ephesians 2:8-9, Ephesians 6:13-18).
- ❖ **Practising Spiritual Disciplines with Purpose:** When we want to improve ourselves in any area, it requires hard work and persistence. In order to learn, we must read, attend school, and do assignments. If we want our bodies to be healthy and fit, we must eat well and exercise. Every discipline (spiritual or otherwise) has a purpose.
 - **Spiritual Disciplines are not the result of a godly life, but rather a means to that end.** They are intentional acts which strengthen our relationship with God and our ability to serve Him.
 - **Spiritual Disciplines help us see our deepest needs fulfilled.** If we long for a closer relationship with God, a deeper understanding of His will, the ability to love others, and the purging of sin from our lives, we must practise specific spiritual disciplines. Since God has placed these desires within us, He will help us achieve them. But we must do the work!
 - Consider these verses about striving toward Godliness.
 - o 1 Corinthians 9:24-27
 - o Hebrews 12:1
 - o 1 Peter 1:13
 - o Hebrews 5:12-14
 - o 2 Timothy 2:1-7
 - o Luke 14:27-30



- ❖ **Who Are Spiritual Disciplines For?** They are for ALL believers. There is no list of them in the Bible, nor is the term 'spiritual disciplines' used, but there are countless examples of disciples of God engaging in them and the voices of early church leaders who wrote about their benefit.
 - **If you are weary, Spiritual Disciplines are for you:** They will give you a greater ability to deal with the stresses of life, and bring joy and fulfillment to your relationship with Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:28-30).
 - **If you hunger and thirst for God, Spiritual Disciplines are for you:** Our cravings, restless spirit and unfulfilled desires indicate that we hunger for God. Engaging in spiritual disciplines is like sitting down to a wonderful meal (Matthew 5:6, John 4:14)!
 - **If you desire a deeper sense of God's presence, Spiritual Disciplines are for you:** Too often, we allow the pressures of life to crowd out spiritual disciplines. Spending time in God's Word and in prayer results in a renewed sense of God's presence with us (Jeremiah 29:13, James 4:8).
 - **If you are a new believer, Spiritual Disciplines are for you:** They are not only for very experienced Christians, in fact they are necessary to give spiritual nourishment to those who are babies in Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:2). New believers begin their life in Christ by learning the discipline of prayer and regular Bible study.
 - **If you are in leadership, Spiritual Disciplines are for you:** When you are continually carrying the burdens of those you lead or teach, it is essential that you spend quality time with the Lord. If you are not meeting your own spiritual needs, you will neglect the needs of others (Acts 20:28).
- ❖ **Cautions:** While spiritual disciplines are essential for Christian growth, especially for a Christian leader, they can be misunderstood. We must be cautious of the following:
 - **Spiritual Disciplines aren't magic:** Meeting regularly with God doesn't automatically fix all our problems. God is at work in us to produce the strength and character needed to face difficulties. The fruit of these disciplines comes from God.
 - **Spiritual Disciplines are not currency:** We cannot buy favour with God by them! Practising self-denial, fasting, doing good deeds will not make God do what we ask Him to. That is not their purpose. God cannot be bought.
 - **Spiritual Disciplines should increase our love for God and others:** If we feel more holy or better than other Christians because of our good works, we are missing the point. Disciplines should humble us, not make us proud.
 - **Spiritual Disciplines are not all for everybody at all times:** Never try to accomplish all the spiritual disciplines at once! Start small, and work on one at a time based on your spiritual needs and the prompting of God's Spirit within you. Some disciplines will be practised your whole life, while some may be just for a time.



- **Spiritual Disciplines take time:** They are called disciplines because they require discipline! They are not an easy fix. When practised regularly over a period of time, you will grow in your faith.
- ❖ **The Spiritual Disciplines:** The remainder of this lesson examines six categories of disciplines, each prompted by a basic need or desire. This is merely a sampling of disciplines that are found in Scripture, and have been helpful and useful to other Christians.
 - Leaders often find themselves exhausted by having to provide for the spiritual needs of others. As a leader, it is essential for your own spiritual health and the health of those you serve, that you take action by setting aside time with God.
 - Read Mark 6:30-31. Can you identify with this passage? Do you feel God calling you to 'go to a desolate place and rest'? Even ten minutes at a time given completely to God can be helpful!
 - The following charts may help you see the various ways God can meet your spiritual needs. They provide a brief overview of the disciplines, but enough to get you started. Much has been written on these topics, so further research may be helpful.

TASK:

There are different ways the following material can be taught. Consider one or more of the following possibilities:

1. *Present this material lecture-style, topically as it is presented in the charts.*
2. *Provide the charts for your participants to take home and read, or use as a resource.*
3. *Divide participants into small groups, and have each group read one discipline as well as the verses at the bottom of the chart. Each small group can then teach the class about this discipline and suggest ways for implementing it in daily life.*
4. *Give participants time and space to choose one discipline to practise today during class time.*
5. *Organize a retreat for participants to take place over an afternoon, day or weekend. Include times of worship, teaching and prayer, but also allow time for them to contemplate the disciplines alone.*



TO CONNECT WITH GOD			
If we desire a deeper connection with God, it requires some action. Learning to pay attention to God's presence during the discipline will help us throughout the day.			
Discipline:	Purpose	Action	Benefits
Retreat	• To get away temporarily from the distractions of life • To spend some personal time alone with God	• Schedule a time away from regular activities. • Select a quiet location where you can be uninterrupted. • While on retreat, pray and practise other disciplines.	• provides uninterrupted time • allows us to calm our thoughts and be free of distractions • allows time to reflect on God's direction for us
Practising the Presence of God	• To cultivate a constant awareness of God's presence	• Start each day with God, and be aware that He is always near. • Turn ordinary moments at work into holy ones through constant prayer and gratitude.	• acknowledgement of Jesus' presence all day long • an increased awareness of God's work in our life • seeing ordinary tasks as sacred appointments
Journaling	• To keep an ongoing account of our journey with God • To track the hand of God in our circumstances and spiritual progress	• Use a journal or notebook, or a computer. • Choose a time each day to write. • Write about what God is teaching you in the struggles of life. • Include a place for prayer requests and answers.	• recognizing God at work in the midst of our struggles • seeing God's faithfulness in the ordinary routines of our life • reflecting on God's blessings and gifts
Silence	• To block out the distractions around us • To achieve total quietness inside and out, in order to listen to God	• Set a time limit – start with a short time. • Find a place where you can be quiet – no TV, radio, electronic devices, or even books that could distract. • Close your eyes, do not talk or pray – just be still and listen.	• detachment from the chaos of life • freedom from addiction to noise • achieving control of our thoughts and environment
God's Word:	<i>Luke 5:16, 1 Kings 19:12, John 5:39-40, Psalm 23:2-3, Mark 6:31, Psalm 46:10</i>		



TO HEAR FROM GOD			
If we desire to hear God speaking to us, the primary means is through His Word. Listening to Him is different than merely reading to absorb facts and information. It is relational. As we approach God and His Word with questions, it is through His Word He answers!			
Discipline:	Purpose	Action	Benefits
Bible Study	- To give us a deeper understanding of God's Word through careful reading and studying entire books, individual topics, or a survey of the whole Bible - To help us grow spiritually – not only to prepare us to teach others	- Study carefully and write down what God is teaching you. - Read the Gospels and investigate who Jesus is as a person and how to follow Him. - Ask questions and find out the answers through doing a word study, topical study or historical background study.	- increased understanding of His truth through expressing our love for God with our mind - allowing God to correct, rebuke or instruct us - receiving direction, encouragement and vision - being aware of God's story throughout history
Devotional Reading	To discover what God is saying to you through reading specific passages of Scripture	- Prepare yourself to receive God's Word by quieting your mind. - Then, read a passage slowly and carefully. You may read aloud or in silence. - When a word or phrase catches your attention, write it down and pray about it. - Read the passage again, and a third time listening to what God says to you.	- hearing personally from God - looking carefully at not just the content, but the meaning of God's Word - discovering the value of praying through Scripture - increased sense of God's presence and direction - deepening of your faith and love for God's Word
Memorization	To have specific parts of God's Word committed to memory for instant recall and application	- Start with one verse that means a lot to you. - Write it on a piece of paper and place in a prominent place. - Recite it or write it out until you know it perfectly without looking. - Continue to review each day. - After mastering short passages, move on to memorization of entire chapters or books of the Bible. Some people put verses to song, or rhythm.	- having God's Word with you constantly - having your head filled with life-giving, God breathed words instead of destructive or worldly thoughts - being able to recall memorized verses when you need them
Meditation	- To allow specific Scripture to change the way we think and live as we dwell on it over a period of time - To fill our mind with God's Word rather than emptying it (as some religions suggest)	- In stillness of heart and mind, consider a word or short phrase from God's Word and think on it. - Consider its meaning, purpose, application. What does it reveal about God? You? Life? - Talk to God about what you think and feel about it.	- learning to focus and calm the mind - being captivated in mind and heart by God's nature and His Word - learning to direct our thoughts to God and free ourselves from distractions
God's Word:	<i>Psalm 119:11, Hebrews 4:12-13, Deuteronomy 30:14, Psalm 119:97, Joshua 1:8</i>		



TO PURGE SIN IN OUR LIVES			
We are easily distracted and deceived, and without coming face to face with our sin, we may never acknowledge it. The spiritual disciplines can reveal sin and allow God to convict us, forgive us, and change us. The Spirit gives us power to live a changed life – but it will require work on our part.			
Discipline:	Purpose	Action	Benefits
Self-Examination	- To acknowledge any unconfessed sin in my life or conscience. and confess the sin to God - To lead me to confession, repentance and reconciliation	- At day's end consider how you acted throughout the day. – When was I loving? – When was I selfish? – Did I display the fruit of the Spirit? – Did I keep my commitments? – Was God honoured by my thoughts and actions? – Is there unconfessed sin?	- increased awareness of my need for God's grace and forgiveness - not allowing sin to take hold and destroy my life - becoming more accountable for my actions - celebrating God's grace and forgiveness
Detachment	- To distance myself from anything that hinders my relationship with the Lord - To strengthen my spiritual life by getting rid of things or relationships that are counter-productive	- Ask God to reveal to you anything that is hindering your Christian growth. - Consider stopping unhelpful behaviours, relationships, attitudes or reactions (anger, sarcasm, etc.) - Give away something you hold tightly. - Turn off or unplug electronic devices, TV or computer if they are becoming addictive.	- freedom from bondage to worldly attachments and desires - honesty with ourselves and others - improved relationships - less reliance on our image or standing before others - increased reliance on God for ability to put Him first in our lives
Confession	- To have a clean and open heart before God through acknowledging our sin - To heal broken relationships with people we have wronged	- Admit your sin before God every day. - Accept God's forgiveness. - Resolve not to return to past sins, and live in the freedom offered in Jesus.	- seeing yourself as God's forgiven child - not allowing guilt or shame to control you - receiving God's power to live a holy life - celebrating God's incredible grace and forgiveness.
Accountability	- To be held responsible for our actions - To develop close friends or mentors who support us, pray for us, and keep us on track in our Christian life and ministry	- Find a person willing to hold you accountable. - Let them know your struggles, confess to them your fears, doubts and sins. Be honest. - The relationship works best if it is mutual. Pray for one another.	- Increased humility before others - ability to keep commitments and resist temptations - not having to stand alone if falsely accused
God's Word:	1 John 1:9, James 5:16, Galatians 6:1-2, Luke 12:15, Galatians 2:20		



TO LOVE OTHERS			
As followers of Jesus Christ we are not alone. We belong to the family of God. Relationships are very important in the Church, and Jesus emphasized that we are to love one another even as He loves us. Maintaining a loving relationship takes time and effort.			
Discipline:	Purpose	Action	Benefits
Humility	• To honour others before ourselves – secretly, rather than to gain applause and prestige • To avoid manipulating others by trying to control • Note: Humility is not thinking very little of ourselves, but rather thinking of ourselves very little!	• Refrain from boasting. • Remain silent about your own abilities, accomplishments and talents. • Elevate others before yourself. • Allow God to define who you are and your value to the Christian community.	• relationships with less tension and competition • letting go of the need to control others or gain recognition • following Jesus' example of humility • Jesus will increase in us as we decrease • seeing His power made perfect in our weakness • focused on loving others
Serving	• To intentionally love others by putting our hands, money, time, energy and talents to work on their behalf • To honour God with our gifts and abilities, not for praise, but to practise love • To help others, even when it is hard, or behind the scenes rather than in the spotlight	• Choose someone to serve and ask them what you can do for them today. Then do it. • Do menial tasks (yes – even as a leader!) that no one wants to do. • Practise hospitality. • Consider caring long-term for an orphan or widow, those who are ill, or those in prison. • Talk to God about how this makes you feel, and your struggles in serving.	• learning to love others by taking care of their needs • freedom from selfish thinking as you put others first • needs are met through your generosity and wise stewardship of resources • people are drawn to Jesus by your example of love
Giving	• To meet the practical needs of others with resources God has given us • To demonstrate to others that God supplies all our needs • To be reminded of our dependence on Jesus Christ, and be freed from anchoring our security in things	• Ask God to direct you specifically to a need, and then respond with a generous heart to the best of your ability and resources. • Choose to give time or resources beyond what you normally would.	• reduced dependence on material things • increased joy in seeing God work through your obedience • others are blessed • increased connection with God and His Kingdom work
Mentoring	• To encourage, strengthen and teach someone younger in the faith	• Choose a disciple and offer to meet with them as a mentor for a period of time. • Meet them on a regular basis to pray and study together. • Help them to reach their God-given potential.	• builds the Body of Christ and strengthens the Church • our focus is on others rather than self • seeing others grow in their faith
God's Word:	<i>John 3:30, Matthew 22:37-39, Acts 20:35, Matthew 6:1-4, Titus 2:3-5, 2 Timothy 2:2</i>		



TO WORSHIP GOD			
We worship God by living every moment of our day with gratitude towards Him. Acknowledging Him constantly in our thoughts, actions and attitudes takes discipline, but brings abundant joy because we serve a great, holy, loving and perfect God!			
Discipline:	Purpose	Action	Benefits
Gratitude	- To express deep appreciation to God for who He is and His bountiful blessings - To acknowledge God's help even in our trials and difficulties - To recognize how God has worked through the sacrifices others have made and the love they have shared	- Count your blessings – write down the good things God has done. - Practise thanking God for all things – even that which hurts us for a time but are ultimately good. - Practise a thankful heart by writing notes of encouragement to people who receive little thanks or recognition. - Choose thankful thoughts.	- freedom from want as we practice being satisfied with God alone - being grateful to others - choosing to be thankful rather than critical - recognizing that what you have comes from God and is a gift, not an entitlement - increased value for others and who they are - less comparing yourself with others, or coveting
Celebration	- To exalt God with joy and praise by bringing attention to what God is doing in our lives, the Church and the world - To express happiness as a community for answers to prayer, births and marriages, special holidays or milestones - To boast about what God has done, and the gifts He has given His people	- Look for opportunities to praise God. - Celebrate God's greatness when you are alone observing nature, or reading His Word. - Celebrate in the company of others by organizing a feast with music, dance, and art. - Include regular prayers of celebration and hymns. - Keep celebrations with friends and family members. - Choose joy even when trials come.	- focuses our mind on God's greatness, faithfulness and love - turns everyday occurrences into opportunities to praise God - keeps life focused less on self, and more on God and the celebration of others - brings the Church together in joyful praise
Worship	- To glorify God and enjoy Him forever, and to put Him first in our life - To exalt and praise God together as a Church	- Participate regularly in corporate worship with other believers. - Set aside times to worship God privately. This may include praising God through words, poems, psalms, reading scripture aloud, singing, playing instruments, or movement.	- learning to rejoice in God - learning that everything else should be secondary to God in our life - drawing closer to God as we worship Him from our deepest spirit
Sabbath and Rest	- To set aside one day in seven for worship and rest from our work - To remember that God rested after creation, that Israel was given rest from slavery, and that there is perfect rest in Christ who frees us from the bondage of sin	- Honour one day a week. From New Testament times, the Church has honoured Sunday as "the Lord's Day." - Choose time to refrain from business, work, stresses and burdens of life and choose to rest in God. - Read His word, enjoy God's gifts of family, friends, community, church and nature.	- refreshing and renewal - freedom from rush and hurry - allowing God to speak about what is most important - realizing that there will be enough time for the work to be done
God's Word:	1 Thessalonians 5:18, Romans 12:1, Psalm 29:2, Exodus 33:14, Mark 2:27		



TO PRAY EFFECTIVELY			
Prayer is at the heart of our relationship with God. Sometimes our prayers become repetitive and unfocused. There are many ways to pray – prayer walking, praying scripture, reading liturgical prayers. Here are a few ways you can pray as a spiritual discipline.			
Discipline:	Purpose	Action	Benefits
Prayer Partners	- To be accountable and disciplined in our prayers by designating a time and place to meet with another person to pray on a regular basis - To have the prayer support of a trusted friend during a special time of need	- Choose one person to meet with regularly for times of prayer. - Pray for requests that you share, and for one another. - Keep requests for your prayer partner handy so you can pray for them daily even when you cannot meet. - Intercede together for world concerns, missions projects or other shared concerns.	- increased time in prayer - shared celebration of answers to prayer - strengthened prayer life by praying with others - developed friendships
Fasting	- To abstain from food, drink (or other activities) in order to focus on an extended time of prayer - To train ourselves to be satisfied in God - To temporarily detach from dependence on worldly things Note: Those with health conditions should not fast from food for long periods of time – fast in other ways.	- If fasting from food, start by omitting one meal. - Drink water if fasting from all food, or fast instead from one category of food, such as meat. - Pray and read God's word during the time you would normally eat. When you feel hungry, ask God to give you a hunger for Him instead. - You may also choose other attachments to abstain from – shopping, sweets, media, internet, activities, etc.	- a more focused time spent with God - increased desire for Him and decreased attachment to the world - practising self-control so that you are more able to obey God - through small deprivations being reminded of Christ's sacrifice for you - repenting of indulgent, addictive or distracting behaviours
Watching	- To refrain from sleeping in order to pray for a heavy concern - To have an extended uninterrupted time to pray to God - To eagerly await God's answer, knowing it could come at any time	- Set an alarm to wake at a fixed time in order to pray. - Have your Bible and prayer list ready. - Practise self-control while tired. - Rely on God to sustain you in spite of missed sleep. - Pray expectantly for God to provide and answer.	- uninterrupted prayer - intimacy with God in the privacy of the quiet night - finding comfort and strength in communion with God - developing self-control
Fixed Prayer	- To set aside a specific period of time each day for extended prayer to ensure that it happens - To interrupt work or other activities for the more important work of prayer	- Choose a specific time or times to pray. - Set an alarm or write it into your daily schedule to remind you. - Develop a prayer list of current needs including church, family and unsaved friends. - You may want to include Biblical prayers or Scripture, or use liturgical prayer guides.	- develops a regular prayer habit - places a priority on our prayer life - the rhythm of day is based on our communication with God
God's Word:	<i>Matthew 6:16-18, Matthew 26:38-40, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Deuteronomy 4:7</i>		



DISCUSSION

- ❖ In this lesson spiritual disciplines are compared to physical fitness exercises, eating of food to satisfy what you crave, a school that will advance your understanding, and a seed that is sown in order to produce a harvest. Which metaphor resonates most with you?
- ❖ Which of the categories of disciplines most reflects the desire of your heart today?
- ❖ There is a misunderstanding among some people that practising many disciplines, or doing a lot of holy things, will cause God to love us more or grant us what we desire. Why is this untrue?
- ❖ How do the disciplines of Christianity compare to the disciplines of other religions? How is Christian fixed prayer different from the way other religions practise it? How is Christian meditation different?
- ❖ One danger of practising spiritual disciplines is that we rely on the practice itself to have power, or upon our own perfect execution of the discipline. The power is found in our renewed and deepened relationship with God, and HIS ability to change us. What are some signs that a person is not practising spiritual disciplines with the right motives?

PRAYER

Close the lesson in prayer. Pray that each participant would understand the value of spiritual disciplines and put them into practice as they lead others. Pray that each participant would be refreshed in their time with God, and hunger and thirst for more time with Him. Pray that as their deepest longings can only be met by God alone, they would be an example to others, and lead those they teach into a deeper relationship with Him.



LEADER TO LEADER

QUOTATIONS FROM LEADERS PAST AND PRESENT ON THE TOPIC OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Spiritual disciplines are means to prevent everything in your life from being filled up. It means to create a space in which something can happen that you hadn't planned or counted on."

-Henri Nouwen, Christian Writer

"A spiritual discipline is an intentionally directed action which places us in a position to receive from God the power to do what we cannot accomplish on our own."

- Richard Foster, Christian writer

"I find it best to incorporate spiritual disciplines into my daily life. I practice gratitude while at the market, I confess sin while washing clothing, I meditate on spiritual food while I prepare meals for my family.

- Medina, mother

"Spending time with God in His Word and in prayer is essential to effective ministry. I never have felt that I have spent enough time in spiritual disciplines. The tyranny of the urgent too often wins out! It is an on-going battle with the enemy who loves to steal quality time from us, or deceive us into thinking we are self-sufficient."

- David, Pastor

I could not be a leader and disobey the mandates the Bible lays out for leaders. I believe the Lord would not honour my service to Him if I was unfaithful to His commands. As I immerse myself in the Word, study the Word, fellowship with other believers, pray, tithe and live as righteously as I can with a mind to keeping short accounts with God concerning my sin, I believe God transforms me. I can't feel it happening but as I look back on my life doing these things has changed me and I believe, made me fit for His service.

- Shawna, Christian Ministry Director

"Spiritual disciplines are provided for our good, not for our bondage. They are privileges to be used, not duties to be performed...They are absolutely necessary for growth in our Christians lives. But we should promote them as benefits, not as duties. Perhaps we should stop talking about being 'faithful' to have a quiet time with God each day, as if we were doing something to earn a reward. It would be better to talk about the privilege of spending time with the God of the universe and the importance for our own sake being consistent in that practice."

- Jerry Bridges, Christian Writer

"The first part of church leadership is being an example of what a church member's life should be, so the first way in which the practice of spiritual discipline enriches my ability to be a leader is by qualifying me to lead. Besides that, spiritual disciplines keep me abiding in Christ and so qualifying to bear fruit as a branch bears the fruit of the vine. For disciplines to be effective, you need a time, a place and a plan. I plan portions of God's word to read, and select a specific time and place to meet with God to ensure that it happens."

- Michael, Pastor