

Helpful Hints, Resources, And Tools For Developing

Spiritual Habits

We want to pursue lives that are on mission and lived on purpose and that starts with developing good spiritual habits. Here are some examples of good “spiritual habits” to be working on:



- Reading the Bible
- Prayer Times - Talking to God
- Journaling - Writing down things God is teaching you or things you are wrestling with
- Gathering in Community - going to church regularly, committing to a small group, having an accountability partner, or all of the above!

There are probably many more to add to this list, but this will get you started. So make a plan, write it down, gather the tools you need, and begin your journey!

READING THE BIBLE

We challenge you to purchase a Bible and start reading it. Why? Because we can't do what God says (obey Him) if we don't know what He says! Here are some ways that you can start:



YouVersion Bible App

This is the most popular Bible App in the world. It is easy to use and has various different ways to engage with your friends or larger church community. It also has tons of reading “plans” that will help you choose how to start reading the Bible.



Read Scripture App

This is one of our favorites. It's beautifully done as both art and video bring the whole Bible together.

There are many other apps out there like ***BibleProject and Dwell***. Just find one and start.

If you prefer to simply open your physical Bible and read, there are so many great reading plans out there. Check out [Ligonier](#), [Navigators](#), or one of our favorite websites, [Bible Gateway](#).

Important things we want you to know:

There should be no pressure in reading a certain amount of the Bible or doing it in a certain time frame. EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT! This will work for some and not for others. You should not “read the Bible in a year” simply as a goal to accomplish and check off your list. Just start somewhere and develop the HABIT.

If you choose to read one verse a day and meditate on that, we would be thrilled for you. That's a WIN!

Ok, now that you heard that clearly, here are a few tips for reading Scripture:

TIP #1: Find a plan that works for YOU.

We love the Bible apps these days but everyone is different. You should also have a physical copy of the Bible and you may prefer to read out of that instead. You may choose to read alone or you can choose to read with someone else. It's up to you, your time, and your schedule.

TIP #2: Find your perfect time and spot.

Whether your reading first thing the morning, on your lunch break, or at the end of the day, find your perfect cozy spot and make that your regular place and time each day. This should be a place that you look forward to going. It should be a place free of distraction. We have found that this simple tip can be a game changer.

PRAYER TIMES

We also need to make a HABIT of prayer. Our prayer team has shared some advice for those of you who want to actively begin doing this or yourself for the first time or for those of you who are “rebuilding” your prayer times.

Helpful Things To Remember About Prayer

1. Quote from a devotional called “First 15”: *“Oftentimes we make prayer far more complex than the Lord ever intended. The weight of change does not rest on our shoulders. It’s God alone who heals and transforms.”* Bill Johnson – “It’s not my job to heal, it’s my job to pray.”
2. God wants to hear from us and is available all the time. He’s ready anytime you are and He listens.
3. Prayer doesn’t have to be a monologue, expect it to be a dialogue. The Creator of the universe, for some inexplicable reason, wants to be your friend and do great things with you. So have a conversation with your friend!
4. Remember, God listens to you. If YOU listen, He will respond in a way that is unique to you. Open all your senses to Him.
5. Prayer isn’t about ritual/religion, it’s about a relationship.

Helpful Hints As You Pray

1. It can be a formal time and place - regular as clock work - or informal, conversational and intimate. Or maybe it's a combination! There is no formula. Create what suits you.
2. Speak from the heart because He already knows the truth of the situation. (If you want a chuckle, think about speaking to your spouse or kids or significant other the way some people pray.)
3. Just go ahead and ask.
4. Find out what your reluctance is to having this conversation. Is it fear? Unbelief? Something else?
5. Treat this relationship as you would any other important one in your life. It needs maintenance.

JOURNALING

Journaling is another popular way people process spiritually. Here are some tips from one of our pastors:

1 Think about what you want journaling to help you do. Do you want to be able to remember important ideas, events, dreams, or feelings? Maybe you need a safe place to process your feelings or thoughts. Do you want to write out prayers? Do you want to try a gratitude journal to help you focus on God's gifts to you? Maybe a mixture! I have tried different kinds of journaling in the past - and some worked better for me than others. Feel free to explore different types and see what works best for you! Knowing the purpose of your journaling will help you as you start out.

2 Find a rhythm that works for you. I don't journal every day because that would stifle me. Some days I journal a lot, and other times I just scribble a few sentences. But if you're someone who needs that consistency to develop a habit, then try to find a few minutes every day to write. And don't beat yourself up if you miss- think of journaling as a tool, not an obligation.

3 Create ideal journaling opportunities. Do you like to write outside or curled up on a couch? Where do you tend to have ideas or thoughts you want to write down? For me, journaling requires at least a little peace and quiet. Usually I make time at home, but I also like to take my journal with me when I'll be at a coffee shop, or even when I know I'm going to meet with people that help me process my ideas.

4 Plan a time to re-read your journal. This might feel scary - sometimes we write things we never want to have to read again. But there is something powerful about looking back at your journal and seeing the JOURNEY it represents. Every time I finish filling out a whole journal, I make time to re-read what I've written. Maybe you like to re-read your journal(s) at the end of every year to help you see where you've come and what is important for the next year. A journal can be a lot like a friend who sees patterns and changes in you that you might not otherwise notice in the day to day.

5 Invite God into your journal time or incorporate it into your prayer/Bible reading time. This doesn't have to be mystical or overwhelming. If you are writing out your thoughts and emotions, take some time to ask God what He wants to speak into these events or feelings. Let Him help you process. Sometimes I chronicle what's going on in my life, then write out questions for God and just listen. This gives me focus and reminds me of my conversations with God on days when I'm feeling farther away.

GATHERING IN COMMUNITY

Another HABIT that we believe is vital to every Christian is anchoring in a community of like-minded people. For one thing, we were created to be with people. For another, when you are a part of a truly grace filled community of people, it is extremely powerful - life changing actually.

In the Bible there are a whole list of “one anothers”. Check out what the Bible says:

- Be devoted to one another (Rom. 12:10)
- Live in harmony with one another (Rom. 12:16)
- Stop passing judgment on one another (Rom. 14:13)
- Carry each other’s burdens (Gal. 6:2)
- Be patient, bearing with one another (Eph. 4:2)
- Forgive each other (Eph. 4:32)
- Instruct one another (Rom. 15:14)
- Admonish one another (Col. 3:16)
- Encourage each other (1 Thess. 4:18)
- Spur one another to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24)
- Confess your sins to each other (James 5:16)
- Pray for one another (James 5:16)

Bottom line: Get around some people in your life that you allow to speak into your life. Make sure it’s a safe place for honest dialogue. Make sure you have fun together. Serve together.

Hmm...sounds an awful lot like what a healthy LIFE Group at Hope Church is. For more information about groups, check out www.cthope.com/lifegroups

BOOKS/ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

We believe that the key to spiritual growth is developing HABITs and rhythms in our spiritual journey. We've put together some resources that talk about the importance of creating habits in life.

"The Power of Habit" - Charles Duhigg

"Ordering Your Private World" - Gordon MacDonald

"Atomic Habits" - James Clear

"The 7 Habits Of Highly Effective People" - Stephen R. Covey

"A Long Obedience In the Same Direction" - Eugene Peterson