

## Exercises for Developing Your Spiritual Muscles

### June 6-7 – Listening to God

Here's your assignment this week. Select one of the following: Psalm 63, Hebrews 11:1-6, Isaiah 40, or I Corinthians 13:4-7 applying what we learned (if you need to review the notes go to the sermon notes which you can find by [here](#)). Move through the disciplines of the eye (sacred reading), the ear (what is God saying to you) and the mind (chew on this bone). I'm working on Psalm 63.

### June 13-14 – Speaking to God

Pray back what you are reading in Scripture, e.g., pray back Psalm 63; Isaiah 40; I Corinthians 13; Hebrews 11. Use the Lord's Prayer as the skeleton to pray every day this week.

### June 20-21 – Purity

- Dress with modesty today
- Refrain from demeaning sexual jokes
- For one day, bring every thought to be captive of God's will (2 Corinthians 10:5)
- Refuse to see any movie or read any material that would be sexually impure
- Refuse to use sex as any test of love

### June 27-28 – Relinquishment

Identify a ministry you care about, or a person or family in need you know about. Write a check for them this week. You decide the amount. Ask God first. If you want to be anonymous, cash is ok.

Then do two more things:

1. Tell God, this doesn't end here.
2. And then do a little happy dance, because you just stuck it to materialism.

### July 5 – Attentiveness

I had a professor in seminary that said that our corporate worship is rather like the marriage bed (wow – between Blake Williams and me, we're really pushing the limits aren't we!)... Kevin Leman wrote a book called "Sex Begins in the Kitchen". The point was that in a marriage, a lifestyle of responsiveness leads to great intimacy in the bedroom.

It's rather the same for our worship. We cannot come to this gathering out of a whole week of not listening, not responding, and expect great worship to happen. I can't make good worship at Village. Pastor John can't make good worship happen at Village. We can play our parts, but you all must play your part too! ALL of these disciplines build on each other. In some regards, this discipline should have been the last one... and in fact,

if we all were to put into practice all of the others – we probably wouldn't need to talk about this one!

- A. Be in Scripture this week...** listening to God
- B. Be in Prayer this week...** responding to God
- C. Come ready for some awesome worship next week**

### **July 11-12 – Opportunity**

-this week—take at least one day and enter into the off road discipline of seizing the moment

-here's what's involved

1. Aim to simply be faithful, available
2. Start your morning with eyes wide—expect God to serve up a window—He always does
  - maybe it will be small—an impulse to reach and call someone who is hurting
  - maybe there is something bigger at work—God is calling you to step out in faith and serve Him in something way beyond yourself
  - maybe a nudge to get out from your safe boat, your pomegranate tree
  - maybe a conviction that this is the moment to share your faith
  - maybe your moment to finally give your life to Jesus
3. When it comes—step out—seize it

### **July 18-19 – Confession**

Take one day this week and do an intense self-examination – maybe use Psalm 15 or 2 Peter 1 as a working text, or maybe Psalm 139

- ask the Spirit to open up area of your life that need attention
- then move slowly through the six point confession
- and then revel in the joy of mercy

### **July 25-26 – Earthkeeping**

As we think about earth keeping, here are some practical disciplines that come out of the mandate to serve and protect the earth:

- sit down as a family and do an earth keeping audit. We did over the weekend and started a list of new habits, from turning off the faucet while brushing teeth to taking bags to the store when we shop.
- Consider being part of a Green team at Village, with the aim of thinking out of the box, creating an ethos where it is clear we honor the Creator
- If able, take advantage of the new cool bike racks at Village.

### **August 1-2 – Submission**

Start today by bringing your dreams, plans, hopes to Him. *Sit*—and let Him affirm His will. *Kneel* and worship Him for His wisdom. *Stand up*—and go after it.

**August 22-23 – Fasting**

Practice being aware of the heart of God—be it His joy or His grief.

Fasting is the practice of responding to life's sacred, grievous moments. If God breaks your heart over sin, over life's frailties, over a sense of God's absence, or other grievous moments, enter into it. Let your body follow with your spirit, and if helpful, skip a meal.

**August 29-30 – Solitude**

We've given an assignment to ourselves as a church, to make this campus more conducive to silence and solitude— in the plaza area and a planned prayer walk. Also, a shift in our pre-worship time in the chapel to silence—where we hope people will come and simply say—come God—speak to us.

Individually, each of us should find a moment, a place to disconnect each day, to pull out all of the plugs. Don't check that e-mail, don't read that text, and don't answer the phone. Turn off that talk radio station; hit the off button on the remote. Keep unplugging—until all the cords are out—and see what happens. You might be surprised. A question you have not been able to get resolution with God is finally answered, tears that have been held in too long are shed, emotions held back get expressed, or superficiality is replaced with depth.