

The Corporate Disciplines:

Avenues for strengthening our relationships with others and God



CONFESSION



WORSHIP



GUIDANCE



CELEBRATION

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

... My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

- Luke 1:46, 47

CONFESSION:

"Confession draws us into the divine mystery of redemption. At the heart of God is the desire to give and forgive." - Richard J. Foster

- On the cross, Jesus took into himself all the dark powers of evil and defeated every one of them by the light of his presence.
- When Jesus said "it is finished" his great work of redemption was completed, the last dregs of the misery of humankind flowed through him and into the care of the Father.
- All the sins of humankind were not just tolerated by God, they were forgiven.
- Confessing sin and receiving forgiveness are realities that heal and transform our inner spirit.
- We are all children of God who together suffer from sin, so we share our confession with one another. Followers of Jesus have the authority to receive confession of others and forgive in Jesus name.
- Three things necessary in confession are: an examination of conscience, sorrow, and a determination to turn from sin.
- Through confession we invite God to move on our heart and show us areas that need his healing.
- Confession is specific, and brings an end to our pretenses.

WORSHIP:

"Worship is our response to the overtures of love from the heart of the Father... It is kindled within us only when the Spirit of God touches our human spirit." - Richard J. Foster

- In true worship every part of the person is involved and affected.
- Worship is the greatest thing that human beings can do. It ushers us into the holy of holies, where we are enabled to see the Lord. It brings us into a holy adventure.
- There are two major contexts for worship:
 1. The Context of Common Life --- Consider Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God."

2. The Specifically Religious Context --- In the specifically religious context we utilize liturgies of worship. In every culture there are different liturgies used to experience the Glory of God through Jesus.
- One of the finest means of worship is through music. Music is one of the most important liturgical expressions.

GUIDANCE:

"God has created us for intimate friendship with himself-- both now and forever. Jesus came to earth to respond to the universal human need to know how to live well." - Dallas Willard

- The Discipline of guidance teaches us to discern the voice of the true Shepherd.
- It takes practice to recognize the voice of God.
- These things help us know if it is God who is speaking to us:
 - Tone of voice-- God does not push and condemn; he draws and encourages.
 - Quality of voice-- The voice of God will be like Jesus: gentle and merciful.
 - Content of voice-- God will speak consistently how he has spoken in the past.
- There are two broad categories of guidance: normal and exceptional.
 1. The normal means of guidance are: Scripture, Direct revelation, Divine providence, The Christian community, Personal integrity
 2. The exceptional means of guidance are: Fleeces, Angels, Dreams, Visions, Signs
- Exceptional means of guidance may come because we are hard of hearing.
- The means of guidance work together; one by itself is dangerous.

CELEBRATION:

"The Christian should be an alleluia from head to foot!" - Augustine of Hippo

- Celebration is one of the loveliest of the Spiritual Disciplines.
- Joy is the end result of all the Spiritual Disciplines! When destructive habits in our lives have been conquered, it is joy!
- "The spirit of hurry and the spirit of joy do not reside in the same house." (Evelyn Underhill)
- Occasions to celebrate may include celebrating when a life has been changed (e.g., a drug addiction conquered or a marriage restored); celebrating and redeeming the festivals of our culture (e.g., Halloween as a festival for the great saints of the church, or Thanksgiving and Christmas); and our own occasions for celebration (e.g., family vacations and rites of passage such as birthdays, graduations, weddings, and anniversaries).
- In celebration we also see the other Disciplines also--such as submitting to others' ideas about what constitutes a celebration, or celebrating as the natural expression of our joy in receiving forgiveness.

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