

# The Outward Disciplines:

Avenues for making a positive impact on others and the world



**SIMPLICITY**



**SOLITUDE**



**SUBMISSION**



**SERVICE**

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

"God has given us the Disciplines of the spiritual life as a means of receiving his grace. The Disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that he can transform us."

- Richard J. Foster

## **SIMPLICITY:**

"Because we lack a divine Center, our need for security has led us to an insane attachment to things." - Richard J. Foster

- Within us are many selves competing for attention and dominance. As a result, we often feel distracted, torn, and overcommitted.
- Only when we experience our many selves under control of God do we enter into balance and equilibrium in life.
- Simplicity means we trust God for our best interests.
- Simplicity is an inward reality that results in an outward lifestyle.
- Simplicity produces inner freedom from anxiety when I know:
  - What I have I receive as a gift from God,
  - What I have is to be cared for by God,
  - What I have is available to others,
- Simplicity produces these outward actions. We:
  - Buy things for their usefulness rather than their status.
  - Reject anything that is producing an addiction in you.
  - Develop a habit of giving things away.

## **SOLITUDE:**

"In stillness our false, busy selves are unmasked and seen for the imposters they truly are."

- Richard J. Foster

- Solitude creates an open, empty space where we can be found by God and let go of all competing loyalties.
- Solitude and silence teach me to love others for who they are, not what they say.
- Solitude and community are a necessary balance.
- In solitude we are not attempting to recharge our batteries so we can win the rat race; in solitude we learn to ignore the rat race altogether.
- Solitude helps us learn to be present where we are.
- As we die to ourselves, we can come alive in God.

## SUBMISSION:

"The most radical social teaching of Jesus was his total reversal of the contemporary notion of greatness. Leadership is found in becoming a servant of all. Power is discovered in submission. The foremost symbol of this radical servanthood is the cross." - Richard J. Foster

- Submission is the most abused of all the Spiritual Disciplines.
- Submission is laying down the terrible burden of always needing to get our own way.
- True submission is not in the details of who gets his or her way, but in an attitude toward the beloved.
- There are seven acts of submission: To the Triune God; To the Scripture; To our family; To our neighbors; To the believing community; To the broken and despised; To the world.

## SERVICE:

"We are called to serve through the many little deaths of going beyond self. And as we live our lives for the good of others, amazingly, we find ourselves." - Richard J. Foster

- As the cross is the sign of Submission, the towel is the sign of Service.
- Service is many daily practical "little deaths" of going beyond ourselves.
- The grace of God empowers us to move beyond ourselves and into service.
- **Self-righteous service:** Comes through human effort; Is impressed with the big deal; Requires external rewards; Is highly concerned about results; Picks and chooses whom to serve; Is affected by moods and whims; Is temporary; Is insensitive and insists on meeting a need; Fractures community.
- **True service:** Comes from a relationship with the Holy Spirit; Does not distinguish the small from the large service; Likes to hide; Does not calculate results; Does not discriminate or judge; Ministers simply and faithfully because there is a need; Is a lifestyle; Can withhold the service as freely as perform it; Builds community.
- True service gets beyond deserving a reward for our efforts for others.
- **A prayer to serve:** "Lord, lead me today to somebody whom I can serve."

*Go to [www.egracechurch.com](http://www.egracechurch.com) for resources on how to begin practicing  
The Outward Disciplines listed here.*