



## *Week 1 | Overview & Apprenticeship*

# Gospel Community Leaders Guide

As we enter into this new season as a 1church, we'll be exploring spiritual practices that encourage us to be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what Jesus did. As we go through this series, the hope is that our Gospel communities will be a place where we can discuss on a deeper level these spiritual practices, and where we can have any practical questions answered. As you meet this week with your Gospel Communities:

### Pray

Pray with your group. Pray that in this new season, your group would have clarity on what it means to be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what Jesus did. Pray that your group would be convinced that their identity in Christ is secure and unchanged by any "success" or "failure" that they may feel in these Spiritual practices.

### Remind

Remind your group of the intended rhythm of the next few months. As we explore these spiritual practices, we will have the opportunity to:

- Have different Spiritual practices introduced and taught on Sundays
- Practice them individually (three times during the week, about 15 minutes each)
- Discuss them in Gospel communities (twice a month)
- Discuss in small discipleship groups where the Spirit is bringing about growth and where we are facing difficulties as we explore these practices (twice a month)

### Encourage

Encourage your group of the following truths:

**No one is going to "master" these Spiritual practices.** The only person who lived a perfect Spiritual life is Jesus. As we seek to be with Him, become like Him, and do what He did, we will fail. This season at Fellowship is not about developing

the perfect prayer life or figuring out exactly what our calling in ministry is—it's about looking to Jesus as our example and following Him, even imperfectly.

We've discussed that this is similar to an apprenticeship—where the student is with the teacher and does what the teacher does. The student is expected to make imperfect progress. It may also be helpful to think of a young child who is learning basic skills. Parents don't correct pronunciation when their baby says her first word, or get frustrated when their child falls after his first steps. In these instances, parents are just thrilled that their children are growing and developing. And children aren't doing these things to gain approval or move on to the next stage; they are just doing what they have seen their parents do. In the same way, our Heavenly Father rejoices to see our transformation, and we continue to transform because of our relationship with Him.

**No stage of life rules out Spiritual growth.** Some of these spiritual practices will not come as naturally during certain stages of life. For instance, families with young kids may not easily be able to practice silence and solitude. This is natural! Different seasons of life bring about different opportunities for Spiritual formation and no two people's Spiritual growth will look the same. Instead of focusing on where our season of life hinders opportunities for Spiritual growth, we must ask of God where He *has* given us opportunities to grow. For instance, those parents with young kids likely have the opportunity to practice servanthood, teaching, and community very often. "Our season of life—whatever it is—is no barrier to having Christ formed in us" - John Ortberg.

## Discuss

Discuss with your Gospel Community:

- **What do you think about this idea of exploring spiritual practices as a church?**
- **Is there anything about this concept that confuses you or is unclear?**

Before you close, encourage members to form discipleship groups. Ideally, these groups will be made up of 3-5 people of the same gender and will meet twice a month. It might even be helpful to give your group a few minutes to begin to form these groups and coordinate schedules. Remind your group that these next few months will require some intentionality with their time and their community. These steps are not meant to over-burden schedules or to add "one more thing," but simply to provide opportunities for growth and transformation. Taking part in any of these steps is beneficial, even though we will all do them imperfectly.