**Abide: Developing Spiritual Rhythms**

Week 2 – Journaling, Witness/Evangelism, Community

**ABIDE / Journaling as a Spiritual Discipline**

**Goal**:

It is the desire to be alert and discerning through writing and reflection on God’s presence and activity within my life, all around my life, and through my life.

**Definition**:

This is a tool or method to inventory and examine your life in all its facets, dynamics, and contexts before God.

**Helen Cepero Journaling as a Spiritual Practice**

“…the spiritual practice…intentionally going below the surface.  It is here that God wants to surprise you with the beauty of your own life, growing and alive, filled with movement, light and shadow. It is here that God wants to meet your own longing for a deeper life with the Spirit’s even greater longing to be with you, in all of who you were and are and will be” (8)

1. She suggests using your journal like a camera lens moving in close narrowly, even minute by minute, and moving out, into your lifetime, to see what might be going on in your life.
2. It teaches us to be aware and open to God, knowing him more deeply, and also ourselves and the world around us.
3. Psalm 139.23-24

**Tips for Journaling**

* Find a time and place that works for you
* Give yourself permission and freedom to write with a flow, not being preoccupied with punctuation and spelling and such.
* Keep your hand moving.
* Silence the inner critic
* Silence the censor
* Start simple and consider the time that works for you
* Ideas for writing:
* Paraphrase a psalm in your own words
* Write your prayers to God
* Write about your life where you are and where you hope to be
* Write about your questions, doubts, fears
* Reflect on something you have valued
* Imagine a doorway in your past and write what you see or what happened
* Write about when you have reimagined yourself, maybe getting there
* Write about your family in the past, present, and hope for future
* Write about what is no longer true about you life
* Consider what is God inviting you to do or be
* Make a list of things you are grateful for
* List 10 or 100 things you want to do before you die
* Reflect on the next step you need to take in your life
* Make a list of your most cherished hopes
* Draw a compass and look every direction and write what you see
* Ask forgiveness
* Write your testimony of life with God
* Reflect on the hardest thing you have faced in life
* Write about the people who are a gift to you
* Write taking a different view of something, in someone else’s shoes
* Write out some ideas for your funeral
* Find a scene in gospels of Jesus on the way to the cross and write about what he might’ve seen and felt
* Reflect on a time you have experienced the risen victorious Jesus
* Write something you hope for each family member
* Reflect on a word that has to do with faith and its meaning to you
* Make a plan for the next step in your spiritual life

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**Witness/Evangelism**

**Evangelism is spreading the Good News of Jesus to the unsaved.**

Evangelism comes from the Greek word: εὐαγγέλιον, meaning the good news of the coming of Jesus

Everything Jesus did, apart from praying and fasting in silence and solitude, was evangelistic.

**Key Verses**

Matthew 9:36-38

Matthew 28:18-20

**Ways to Evangelize**

Street Evangelism

Servant Evangelism

Apologetics

Testimonial Approach to Evangelism

Relational Approach to Evangelism

Invitational Approach to Evangelism

**Tommy’s Top 3 Evangelism Styles for 2024**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Tips and Tricks**

1. People are not denying you, they are denying God.
2. How to start a spiritual conversation without being awkward: “God put you on my heart, how can I pray for you?”

**15 Second Testimony**

My life was this way … I met Jesus … now my life has changed for the better

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**Community**

**Begins with Solitude**

                  Luke 6:12-19

**Is not optional**

**Is the opposite of easy**

**Is filled with blessed tension**

*Almost everyone finds their early days in a community ideal. It all seems perfect. They feel they are surrounded by saints, heroes, or at the least, the most exceptional people who are everything they want to be themselves. And then comes the let-down. The greater their idealization of the community at the start, the greater the disenchantment. If people manage to get through this second period, they come to a third phase — that of realism and of true commitment. They no longer see other members of the community as saints or devils, but as people — each with a mixture of good and bad, darkness and light, each growing and each with their own hope. The community is neither heaven nor hell, but planted firmly on earth, and they are ready to walk in it, and with it. They accept the community and the other members as they are; they are confident that together they can grow towards something more beautiful. – Jean Vanier (L’Arche Communities)*

*"Part of the very essence of Christianity is to be together in a concrete community, with all the real human faults that are there and the tensions that this will bring us. Spirituality, for a Christian, can never be an individualistic quest, the pursuit of God outside of community, family, and church. The God of the incarnation tells us that anyone who says that he or she loves an invisible God in heaven and is unwilling to deal with a visible neighbor on earth is a liar since no one can love a God who cannot be seen if he or she cannot love a neighbor who can be seen... Hence a Christian spirituality is always as much about dealing with each other as it is about dealing with God.”* - Ronald Rolheiser *(1 John)*

*“Spiritual formation occurs primarily in the context of community. Persons who remain connected with their brothers and sisters in the local church almost invariably grow in self-understanding. And they mature in their ability to relate in healthy ways to God and to their fellow human beings. This is especially the case for those courageous Christians who stick it out through the often-messy process of interpersonal discord and conflict resolution. Long-term interpersonal relationships are the crucible of genuine progress in the Christian life. People who stay grow.” – Joseph Hellerman*

**Community takes time and intentionality! Give it time! Keep Showing Up!**

**Journal Page**

**Journal Page**