

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Spiritual Practices allow us to “practice” our faith so that we can *love God and love our neighbor as ourselves*. The challenge is to practice in multiple settings. To that end, choose one or more practices from each column. Observe how you move from contemplative to action, individual to community and faith setting to worldly context. As you practice, journal your thoughts. How is God at work, helping your grow?

Faith Setting (During Covid, please find ways to do these practices online or be creative for safer ways!)	Personal (involves our relationship with body, family & friends)	Mystical or Spiritual	World Context
Regular participation in Sunday Worship	Adopt vegetarianism. Start slow with Meatless Monday meals	Adopt a set practice of daily prayer (i.e. praying for others, contemplative prayer, praying the psalms, prayer of examen, etc.)	Read a daily newspaper/article from your opposite viewpoint.; pray the headlines
Take on a liturgical role...read the texts, say the prayers, provide special music or share a faith story.	Practice listening... to yourself, to others, to nature	Try extemporaneous prayer as part of your daily prayer	Choose and support an international or social justice cause
Occasionally participate in a Christian worship or program of an ethnic community different from that of your own	Take up an exercise plan;	Attend a museum or view paintings online. Choose one piece of art & view it for 5 minutes; Where do your eyes linger? What new thoughts arise? How is God at work in the images?	Attend the Dance Theatre of Harlem via YouTube. How is God at work?
Create a worship altar at home; with your family create a daily worship ritual	Attempt to reestablish a friendship that has become distant	Read the entire Bible; read a book of the Bible; read the Old or New Testament. Read poetry.	As you drive around Austin, where do you see the homeless or those in need? Educate yourself about the issues surrounding those in need. How can you help?
Lead a Bible Study or prayer group within your community of faith	Create a vision or prayer board. Select images/ words based on a question such as: What have I been neglecting? How do I live my unlive life? Talk with a spiritual director (via zoom) to facilitate deeper conversations	Practice the “Jesus prayer” or sing a hymn or song while engaging in other activities, i.e. exercising, driving to work, yoga, walking. How are you changed?	Read articles about social issues (Women, LGBTQ+, minority, immigration, prison, male masculinity, etc.) Journal your thoughts. Speak with a Spiritual Director for deeper conversations.
Watch a video of Sufi whirling dervish dancers. They dance to get closer to God. Could you dance to get closer to God?	Read scriptures or books about forgiveness and make amends. Desmond Tutu is a good place to begin reading about forgiveness	Walk a labyrinth (St. David’s Episcopal in Downtown Austin has an outdoor labyrinth) or find a labyrinth online to trace with your hands. As you walk or trace the labyrinth, what questions arise? Journal your thoughts	Take an inventory of your “Carbon Foot print” and implement positive changes
Organize a charitable event or fund-raising project to help meet the needs of a group outside the church community	Adopt the practice of a “Sabbath meal”; eliminate social media, answering emails and texts one day a week as a Sabbath practice	Devise and use a method of intercessory prayer	Via youtube “attend” art galleries, music performances or attend a cultural event that is not familiar to you. What new insights come to you?
Watch a video of liturgical dancing. How is God worshipped through dance?	Tell your children stories from the Bible or stories of saints who are women, minority, lay leaders, etc.)	Use dance, singing, music, art, or writing as part of regular devotion	Devise one hospitality events for people outside our church that meets a need during Covid. Be creative to keep it safe!
Plan and participate an on-line event sponsored with faith communities of other faith traditions i.e. music, dancing or food. Be creative	Educate your children about a cause for which you are passionate about!	Draw up and observe a rule of life. Author, Joan Chittister is a good place to begin your research about creating a rule (or guide) for you.	Blog or write an article about social or church organizations that are making a difference in your city, state or nation to help those in need
Choose a favorite hymn or song on YouTube, listen to a variety of artists and choirs sing the same song. Which ones move you toward God?	Give up alcohol one day a week	Spend 20 minutes in prayer daily	Join a virtual Red Bench Conversation, sponsored by IACT (interfaith group) as a way to listen to other people