

Spiritual Formation Ideas 2019
FAQ

In response to some questions I have received regarding our spiritual formation initiative and the document I distributed, I have created a FAQ sheet to help provide clarity. This is a working document. As there are more questions raised, I will endeavor to answer them here. I am also always available to talk in person or by phone on any specific questions.

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1. Why do you use the word liturgy?

The word liturgy is the translation of the ancient Greek word 'leitourgia' which literally means 'work of the people'. In a religious sense, it is most known as the standardized order of events or rituals observed during a religious service. I have adapted this word for usage in a private sense to denote the practices, routines or rituals that one does in their day to day ordinary life. I am extending the word to challenge one to think about their whole day as a sort of 'worship service' and the liturgy as the routines that one has placed into their day. So, I could have just as easily replaced the word liturgy with 'routines' or 'habits'.

2. Isn't meditation a Hindu or Buddhist practice?

Although meditation is used in these religions, meditation is also a part of Christianity. Indeed, Christians are commanded to meditate on the Scriptures. Joshua was commanded in Jos 1:8 to meditate day and night on God's Law. Timothy was commanded to meditate on Paul's instructions in the Bible (1 Tim 4:15). The Bible calls a person blessed who meditates on the law of the Lord (Ps 1:1-2). Christian meditation however differs from the type of meditation found in eastern religions or that promoted by Christian mystics such as the Quakers. The primary difference lies in this: Biblical meditation dwells on things already revealed in general revelation (creation) or special revelation (the Bible), while these other forms of meditation are seeking to have some new truth revealed. So, the Christian does not meditate in order to receive some new revelation of God separate from His Word, but rather to nourish man in his understanding of God and His already revealed will

3. What is the practice of silence?

I will start off by stating what the practice is not. It is not an attempt to empty one's mind or thoughts in an effort to lose oneself, or in order to become connected to some divine consciousness. This is a very Hindu concept that is foreign to Christianity. The practice of Silence or 'stillness' is the process of sitting silently before the Lord for the purpose of revering and respecting the awesomeness of the Lord. It is also an opportunity to ponder our sin and need

for God. Several verses point to this practice. You will notice in the below verses that they all take the form of commands from God.

Psa. 46:10 “**Be still, and know** that I am God.

I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!”

Psa. 37:7 **Be still before the LORD** and wait patiently for him;

Psa. 4:4 ¶ ^kBe angry,² and do not sin;
ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and **be silent**.

Zeph. 1:7 ¶ **Be silent** before the Lord GOD!

For the day of the LORD is near;

Zech. 2:13 ¶ **Be silent**, all flesh, before the LORD, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.

Hab. 2:20 But the LORD is in his holy temple;
let all the earth **keep silence** before him.

It is not a practice that is separate from God's Word. Indeed, we need God's Word as our guide to ponder the awesomeness of the Lord.

In our busy world, we rarely slow down to ponder our frailty and the Lord's greatness. The Lord gives us this command to be silent or still so we can slow down long enough to gain a right perspective of reality.

4. What is the practice of contemplation?

Probably the easiest answer would be that contemplation focuses on seeing and knowing the beauty of the Lord. It is reminiscent of King David's desire in Psalm 27:4 *One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.*

5. What is calendar observation?

Calendar observation is the usage of dates and events to help us in our quest to honor the Lord. The Christian calendar helps us to call to mind the actions of the Lord which are rooted in history. The Christian calendar is a tool for the Christian, nothing more. It is not to be followed slavishly for it functions as a servant, not as a master

6. What is baptismal anniversary?

It regards the date when one was baptized. See #5 for more explanation.