



## Week 2: Deeply Formed Practices of Contemplative Rhythms

### Overview

Last week we talked about the biblical and theological foundations for contemplative rhythms, today we want to discuss practices that enable us to embrace those rhythms. Specifically we want to discuss *silent prayer*, *Sabbath keeping*, *the slow reading of Scripture*, and *the commitment to stability*.

- Silent prayer brings us into union with God based not in our performance but in God's love for us.
- Sabbath-keeping gives us the grace of rest, reminding us we are not what we do.
- Slowly reading Scripture can be accomplished by the four-step practice of *lectio divina*.
- Stability roots us in a community with people who learn over time to love one another.

These four practices cause us to slow down in order to be present to God and to be embraced by God's love.

### Introduction

Let's begin by introducing ourselves. Be open to yourself, to God, and to the people in your group. It is ok if you feel a little bit uncomfortable. Just know you are invited to be as vulnerable as you would like to be.

As a group let's commit ourselves to these guidelines:

1. Speak only for yourself, use "I" statements
2. Keep your sharing to 2-3 minutes, give room for others to share
3. No fixing, saving, or setting other people straight
4. Trust and learn from silence, there is no pressure to share
5. Observe confidentiality, what is said in the group stays in the group

### Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow *love*; where there is injury, *pardon*; where there is doubt, *faith*; where there is despair, *hope*; where there is darkness, *light*; and where there is sadness, *joy*.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as *to console*; to be understood as *to understand*; to be loved as *to love*. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

## For Starters

After the following paragraph is read aloud, answer the questions below on your own and then be ready to share some of your thoughts with the group.

In the beginning of Chapter 2, Rich writes, “*The more familiar you are with someone, the easier it is to be silent in that person’s presence. If this general observation is true, this has many implications for our lives with God. One could argue that discomfort with being silent before God just might reveal how unfamiliar we are with God.*”

1. Who in your life do you know so well that you feel relaxed enough to be open and transparent with?
2. Who from history, or from the present-day, do you know a lot about, but have never really met?
3. What are the differences between knowing God and knowing things about God?
4. On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being *extremely comfortable*, how comfortable are you sitting quietly in the presence of God?

## Let’s Talk

1. What are the differences between establishing a relationship with God based on *demands* and establishing a relationship with God based on *friendship*?

2. What do you do when you are distracted in prayer?

Have a member of the group read Luke 10:38-42 out loud slowly and listen. Have this passage read out loud a second time and pay attention to a particular word or phrase. This is the second step of *lectio divina*: meditation.

3. What word or phrase stood out to you? Why do you think you were drawn to it?

4. What thoughts or feelings rise to the surface when you consider Mary seated at the feet of Jesus?

5. How does Sabbath remind us of the gospel of grace?

6. What kind of Bible-reading plans have you tried in the past? What works best for you?

7. What good things grow in our lives when we are rooted in stability?

8. Which of the four practices do you need to give attention to first? What steps can you take this week to begin to grow in that practice?