

# Life Together

# Overview

“If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together.” We are not designed to travel the spiritual journey by ourselves. We need community to practice the Way.

And Jesus’ call to community goes far beyond church attendance to relationships of depth, vulnerability, and a commitment to transformation.

## Practice reflection

Before we begin Session 08, break up into small groups and share your reflections on last session’s exercise of creating a Rule of Life.

- 01 Share about your process of creating a Rule of Life. What worked for you?
- 02 What feelings came up for you as you worked through this exercise?
- 03 What do you anticipate will be the most life-giving and transformative practice you came up with?

# Teaching

## Scripture

A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.” “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

—Mark 3v32-35

## Session summary

- Jesus’ invitation was to come and do life together.
- Through Jesus, we have been adopted into the family of God.
- Jesus’ desire is not just to form you into a person of love, but to form a community of love.
- You can’t follow Jesus alone; spiritual formation is a relational process.
- Four layers of community\*:
  - Intimates: 1-5 people who deeply know and love us
  - Friends: 15 people with whom we do life
  - Village: 150 people, the maximum we can be in relationship with
  - Tribe: The larger group we identify with and belong to
- Spiritual friendships are marked by three core characteristics:
  - Depth
  - Vulnerability
  - Commitment to transformation
- Our final practice is to cultivate a community of spiritual friendship and begin meeting regularly.

\* Robin Dunbar, “Coevolution of neocortical size, group size and language in humans,” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 16, no. 4 (1993).

# Teaching notes

As you watch Session 08 together, feel free to use this page to take notes.

# Discussion questions

Pause the video and take some time to process together as a community.

Here are some questions for discussion:

- 01 Of the three relational characteristics named (depth, vulnerability, and a commitment to transformation), which is the hardest for you?
- 02 As you reflect on your life and relationships, who has been or could be a “soul friend” to you on this spiritual formation journey?
- 03 What has Jesus done in your life over the last eight weeks, during our time together?
- 04 What’s your next step in your spiritual journey, your “next right thing”?

# Practice notes

As you continue to watch Session 08 together, feel free to take notes here.

# After the video

## Closing prayer

End your time together by praying this liturgy:

Lord Jesus,  
There is no greater prayer than yours —  
make us one as you are one,  
in devotion, in living, in love.  
Amen.

### OPTIONAL

If you'd like to continue your conversation, here are some additional questions for reflection:

- 01 What comes up when you consider meeting in an intentional community?
- 02 What natural pathways exist in your life for this, whether within your church or other spaces?
- 03 As you examine your own desires, what do you envision for your time?  
Engaging in a Practice? Reading a book? Taking a BibleProject class?  
Meeting for a meal or prayer? Or something else?

# Practice

## Do life in community

Jesus' call to community isn't a theory or an idea, it's a practice — a relational way of doing life together.

Jesus would preach to crowds of thousands, but he spent most of his time with a small circle of disciples, in homes and around tables.

It's important to worship in church on Sunday and be part of a larger community, but it's just as important to know and name your "twelve" and your "three." To cultivate spiritual friendships that last for years.

So our final practice is to identify our intentional community and begin to meet with them regularly.

**01 Identify a community to meet with regularly.**

**02 This community could be with just one or two others, or a dozen or even more.**

**03 We recommend you meet weekly, but it could be bi-weekly or monthly.**

**04 We also recommend you share a meal when you meet. The act of "breaking bread" is central to the Christian way. Something powerful happens when we eat together.**

- But remember, there's no one "right" model for you to follow. You may choose a house church with 20 kids running around a backyard on a Sunday afternoon or a small triad for group spiritual direction early in the morning.
- We encourage you to follow the pathway of your church — whether in a small group, table community, or house church, or a women's or men's Bible study.
- You could follow this Course with any of the nine Practices available from Practicing the Way, share a weekly meal and pray for one another, or work through more free resources from BibleProject, like the following:
  - Reflections mini-cast with discussion questions: [bibleproject.com/podcasts/reflections](https://bibleproject.com/podcasts/reflections)
  - Reading plans: [bibleproject.com/reading-plans](https://bibleproject.com/reading-plans)
  - Heavier classes: [bibleproject.com/classroom](https://bibleproject.com/classroom)



# Resources to go deeper

If you're interested in learning more about doing life in community, here are some more resources to consider.

## Recommended reading

- *When the Church was a Family* by Joseph Hellerman
- *The Connected Life* by Todd Hall
- *Made to Belong* by David Kim

## Recommended listening

- The Community Practice teaching series from Bridgetown Church:  
[link.practicingtheway.org/course-s8](https://link.practicingtheway.org/course-s8)

## Additional Resources

- The Community Practice from Practicing the Way: [practicingtheway.org/community](https://practicingtheway.org/community) (coming soon). If you'd like to learn more about the practice of community, you can run the Community Practice, a four-session experience designed to integrate the practice of community into your regular life.



## Guest bio

Our guest this session was Reverend Dr. Charlie Dates, pastor of Salem Baptist Church of Chicago. He is a speaker, professor, and author. Check out his contribution in the book, *Say It!: Celebrating Expository Preaching in the African American Tradition*, or listen to him preach at [saalemchicago.org](http://saalemchicago.org).

# Practice reflection

Reflection is a key component in our spiritual formation. Like practice, it allows what we learn to become a part of who we are.

For your final reflection in this course, take five to ten minutes to journal out your answers to the following two questions.

- 01 As you think back over this Course, what is sticking with you most?
- 02 Take a moment to remember how you felt when you first started this Course.  
What has changed in how you feel or think? How do you see yourself or God differently? Do you notice any change or growth?

PART 03

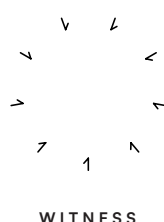
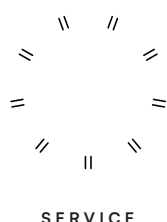
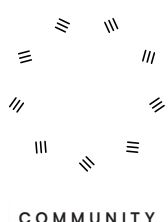
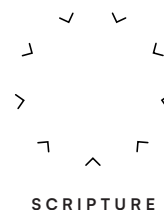
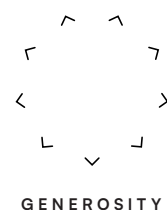
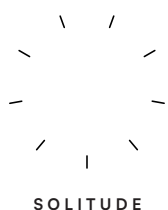
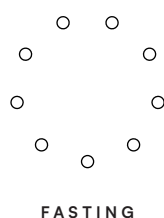
# Continue the Journey

# The Practices

**Information alone isn't enough to produce transformation.**

By adopting not just the teaching but the practices from Jesus' own life, we open up our entire being to God and allow him to transform us into people of love.

Our nine core Practices work together to form a Rule of Life for the modern era.



## Each Practice includes:

### Four Sessions

Each session includes teaching, guided discussion, and weekly exercises to integrate the Practices into daily life.

### Companion Guide

A detailed guide with question prompts, session-by-session exercises, and space to write and reflect.

### Recommended Resources

Additional recommended readings and podcasts to get the most out of the Practices.

# Recommended Reading

## Books on spiritual formation

- *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer
- *The Renovation of the Heart* by Dallas Willard
- *The Great Omission* by Dallas Willard
- *Invitation to a Journey* by M. Robert Mulholland
- *The Deeply Formed Life* by Rich Villodas
- *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Pete Scazzero
- *The Relational Soul* by Richard Plass and James Cofield
- *Sacred Fire* by Ronald Rolheiser

## Books on solitude and silence

- *Invitation to Solitude and Silence* by Ruth Haley Barton
- *The Way of the Heart* by Henri Nouwen
- *The Power of Silence* by Robert Cardinal Sarah

## Books on prayer

- *Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools* by Tyler Staton
- *Armchair Mystic* by Mark Thibodeaux
- *Prayer* by Richard Foster
- *The Spiritual Life* by Evelyn Underhill
- *The Shattered Lantern* by Ronald Rolheiser
- *Time for God* by Jacques Philippe

## Books on Scripture

- *Shaped by the Word* by M. Robert Mulholland
- *Eat This Book* by Eugene Peterson

## Books on Sabbath

- *Sabbath* by Dan Allender
- *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly* by Marva J. Dawn
- *The Sabbath* by Abraham Joshua Heschel
- *Subversive Sabbath* by A.J. Swoboda

## Books on community

- *When the Church Was a Family* by Joseph Hellerman
- *The Connected Life* by Todd Hall
- *Made to Belong* by David Kim
- *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

## Books on a Rule of Life

- *God in My Everything* by Ken Shigematsu
- *At Home in the World* by Margaret Guenther

## Devotional reading

- *A Testament of Devotion* by Thomas Kelly
- *With* by Skye Jethani
- *Interior Freedom, Time for God, and Searching for and Maintaining Peace* by Jacques Philippe
- *The Pursuit of God* by A.W. Tozer
- *Experiencing the Trinity* by Darrell Johnson
- *Christian Perfection* by François Fénelon

# The Circle

Practicing the Way is a nonprofit that develops spiritual formation resources for churches and small groups learning how to become apprentices in the Way of Jesus.

We believe one of the greatest needs of our time is for people to discover how to become lifelong disciples of Jesus. To that end, we help people learn how to be with Jesus, become like him, and do as he did, through the practices and rhythms he and his earliest followers lived by.

All our resources are available at no cost, thanks to the generosity of The Circle and other givers from around the world who partner with us to see formation integrated into the Church at large.

To learn more or join us, visit [practicingtheway.org/give](https://practicingtheway.org/give).



