

The Deeply Formed Life is a roadmap to live in the richly rooted place we all yearn for: a place of communion with God, a place where we find our purpose amid chaotic times. Join us in exploring five practices that can spark internal growth and help us reconcile our Christian faith with the complexities of race, sexuality, and social justice.



### Questions for Reflection:

- What spiritual practices have formed your life up to this point? Can you name any practices you want to grow in?
- Read the scriptures. Which words or phrases stand out to you?
- The word abide/remain appears multiple times in John 15. How do you hear that word in this moment of your life?
- Slowing down requires us to courageously step away from demands that crush our lives. What would it look like for you to begin to take intentional steps for doing this?
- In the chapter on Contemplative Rhythms in the book *The Deeply Formed Life*, Rich Villodas highlights four contemplative practices: silent prayer, Sabbath keeping, slow reading of Scripture, and stability. Which of these practices have you tried in some form in the past? Which practice would you like to try this week?

Adapted from *The Deeply Formed Life* by Rich Villodas

### Spiritual Practice: Silent Prayer

Set an alarm for 5 minutes. If 5 minutes seems to long, start with 1 minute, then increase to 3 minutes and work your way to 5. Take a deep breath and slowly pray the words, “Jesus, here I am.” Whenever your mind gets distracted, gently return to that phrase. The goal of this silent prayer is to simply share presence with God, not to expect to receive anything. Just be.

Adapted from *The Deeply Formed Life* by Rich Villodas, page 224

You might also consider praying the words of Psalm 46:10, “Be still and know that I am God.” As you pray repeat the verse eliminating one word at a time until you are left with the word be. Then just be still and silent for the remaining time. If you struggle with sitting still, try keeping a piece of paper next to you. Doodle when you feel distracted.

### Spiritual Practice: Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading, Slow Reading of Scripture)

Lectio Divina is an ancient practice of praying the scriptures; a reflective reading that calls us to listen to God's word with our heart. Lectio Divina is a reading, reflecting, responding, and resting in the word of God that helps one grow in relationship with God. Lectio Divina involves five basic steps: lectio, meditatio, oratio, contemplatio, and incarnatio. Don't be intimidated by the Latin words or be too rigid in following the steps! Simply embrace and enjoy some quiet time in God's presence, reading, hearing, and responding to what God has for you today!

Begin with a time of silence, taking some deep cleansing breaths as you let go of all your concerns and worries. Just be still in the presence of God. Choose a scripture. Perhaps Faith United's 2022 Mission and Ministry Theme, Psalm 1:1-3.

**Lectio (Hearing the Word):** Read the Scripture slowly, either out loud or silently. Read the passage more than once to truly hear it, allowing a time of silent rest between readings. Pay attention to any word, phrase, or image that intrigues you or puzzles you.

**Meditatio (Pondering the Word):** Ponder more deeply on the word, phrase, or image that caught your attention. Repeat it. What images, ideas, and perceptions does it evoke? Allow this word, phrase, or image to engage your thoughts. How is God speaking to you through it?

**Oratio (Dialogue with God):** What prayer emerges from your meditation? Ask God to transform you through the word, phrase, or image from Scripture. How does it connect with your life? What is your response to what God is saying?

**Contemplatio (Heavenly Rest):** Rest your heart and mind and just be silent in God's presence.

**Incarnatio (A Calling Forward):** Now that you have rested in God's Word, how do you emerge? How might you represent God's love and grace in your family, community, and the world?

Check out the **Spiritual Practices 101 video** to learn more about Lectio Divina - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7A8mzw21AI>

*“Meditation is holding the Word of God in the mind until it has affected every area of one's life and character.” - Andrew Murray*