

Connecting Body and Spirit –

Bi-District Training Day – January 2019 – Megan Seals

Initial Group Discussion Questions

1. When do you experience silence in your life?
2. Does prayer come naturally for you? If so, what is your current prayer practice? If not, reflect on your feelings toward prayer.
3. How would your relationship with God grow and change if you spent more time listening or in silence?

***Holy Listening with Breath, Body, and the Spirit* by Whitney R Simpson**

Holy Listening – ancient practice of listening for spiritual direction from God without expectations or assumptions. To best listen, you should learn to connect and engage your breath, body, and spirit.

The Power of Breath, Body, and Spirit

- Your life begins and ends with breath.
- The incarnation of Jesus shows us that our spirituality should also be incarnational. The body is an intimate way to commune with God.
- Slowing down our pace and listening to our bodies can offer clues into our spiritual needs

Elements:

- Lectio Divino - “holy reading” – Formational reading rather than informational reading that is made up of four parts: Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest.
- Yoga – Practice that brings together mind, body, and spirit if you combine the intention of focusing on God with the physical practice of yoga.
- Breath Prayer – Contemplative practice that links prayer to the rhythm of your own breath. Breathe in – call on a biblical name or image of God; Breathe out – express the longings of your heart.
- Aromatherapy – Using extracts from plants to benefit the mind body, and spirit by engaging your senses. Modern essential oils allow you to connect to the ancient use of oils in anointing, healing, offerings, and burial.
- Journaling – Writing can allow you to access feelings that you might not realize exist, and it serves as a meditative physical act.
- Sacred Space – Create a space in your home or in nature that is quiet and free of distractions. You can include a candle, incense, diffuser, cross, yoga mat, journal, or symbols of your faith journey.

Format or Usage

- Individual 40-day devotional
- Weekly small group
- Prayer services

Reflection questions:

1. How comfortable were you with the activity? The stillness? Yoga? Are there any parts that were not comfortable for you?
2. Did you hear any new words or ideas from God today?
3. How can you rid yourself of some of the noise and distractions in your life and spend time listening to God?
4. Who companions you on your spiritual journey or holds you accountable?
5. How can caring for your body allow you to care for your spirit?

Extension questions:

1. How might you incorporate some of these into your own church or small group?
2. What resources might you already have? What resources would you need?
3. How might you use some of these practices to engage with the community outside of your church?

Additional Resources

- *Prayer and Our Bodies* by Flora Slosson Wuellner
- *Holy Yoga: Exercise for the Christian Body and Soul* by Brooke Boon
- *Awaken to Healing Fragrance: The Power of Essential Oil Therapy* by Elizabeth Anne Jones
- *Aromatherapy for the Soul: healing the Spirit with Fragrance and Essential Oils* by Valerie Ann Worwood
- *Made to Move: Knowing and Loving God Through Our Bodies* by Wendy LeBolt (*coming soon)