

How can we open ourselves to God's grace?

Hilliard United Methodist Church

Spiritual Practice (habit, discipline)

How this spiritual habit helps to connect us with God and open us up to grace...

Bible reading and study

Helps us get to know who God is and what God is like; helps us hear God; helps us find direction; helps us see the big picture of God's purposes in the world

Prayer & Meditation

Helps us calm down and slow down; helps us focus on God and on the needs of other people; helps us listen to God; helps us confess our sins to God and get reconnected with God; gives us strength and courage; helps us recommit ourselves to God

Journaling

Like keeping a diary, when we journal we write about our spiritual life: where we're seeing God working in our lives and in the lives of our friends and family, what we need to say to God

Simplicity

Simplifying helps us unclutter our lives and gives us freedom from possessions; helps us remove all of the conflicting claims on our time and energy so that we can make room and time to be with God

Worship & Holy Communion

Helps us encounter God through community with other believers; helps us love God through words and songs of praise. Accepting the grace and forgiveness of God in Holy Communion helps sustain and nourish our relationship with God

Generosity (with your money, time, talents)

Reminds us that everything we have is a gift from God; helps us be more selfless and more focused on the needs of others; helps us be more like God, since God is a giving God; gives us an antidote to materialism; strengthens our trust that God will provide for us

Service to others

Helps us think of the needs of others; helps us be more selfless; helps us appreciate what we do have and God's gifts to us

Spiritual Reading

Helps clarify the Bible and make spiritual things more clear to us

Appreciating Creation

Helps us love and praise God; reminds us of all the gifts and blessings God has given us

Small Faith-Sharing Groups

Helps us stay committed to our journey with God; gives us strength and courage and helps us find solutions for and insights into life's difficulties; helps us connect with other people of faith; helps us apply Scripture to life; gives us a place to share our spiritual gifts in service to others

Fasting

Helps us remember that food and other earthly things don't make us who we are, that it is God who makes us, feeds us, and provides for us

Some Tips

If spiritual practices are new for you, start by coming to worship every Sunday you can, and then these three:

1. **Bible reading and study**: If you haven't read much of the Bible yet, we'd encourage you to:
 - a. Start with the Gospel of Mark — it's the shortest one, and it's written in a pretty clear style, so it's easier to understand than some other books. Try reading a Bible version written in a contemporary style, like Eugene Peterson's *The Message*.
 - b. Find a daily devotional guide and start reading it every day: The best ones give you a short scripture verse and then a short reflection and prayer. The church has some copies of *The Upper Room* daily devotional in the hospitality areas of each building, if you'd like one.

2. **Prayer**: If you're just beginning to develop a daily prayer habit, we'd recommend:
 - a. Choose a specific time each day (don't choose first thing in the morning if you're a night person!), for consistency (consistency helps develop the habit).
 - b. Choose a specific location: The side porch, your bedroom, the family room — someplace where you won't be interrupted or distracted.
 - c. Then just talk to God and tell God what's on your heart and mind. Remember to listen, too.

3. **Service to others**: There are many opportunities for service within and beyond the walls of our church listed in the worship folder every week — pick one and try it! Habitat for Humanity, Vacation Bible School, summer Sunday school teaching, chancel choir....

If you've embraced various spiritual habits for some time, maybe now's the time to try a new one, and mix things up a bit!

