

## What Is Spiritual Formation?

*Spiritual formation is the activity of the Holy Spirit  
which molds our lives into the likeness of Jesus Christ.*

*This likeness is one of deep intimacy with God  
and genuine compassion for all of creation.*

*The Spirit works not only in the lives of individuals  
but also in the church, shaping it into the Body of Christ.*

*We cooperate with this work of the Spirit  
through practices that make us more open*

*and responsive to the Spirit's touch,*

*disciplines such as sabbath keeping, works of compassion and justice, discernment,  
worship, hospitality, spiritual friendships, and contemplative silence.*

—definition of the Office of Spiritual Formation, Presbyterian Church (USA)

### ***Spiritual Practices listed in action of the 215<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2003):***

- devotional reading
- praying
- resting and Sabbath keeping
- contemplation and discernment (attentiveness to the Holy Spirit)
- nurturing spaces for silence and solitude in a noisy world
- cultivating the arts of hospitality and generosity
- spiritual guidance and friendships
- engaging in works of compassion and justice
- maintaining healthy lifestyles
- managing material resources for God's service
- other classical and traditional forms of piety that have proven themselves useful to many through the history of the ecumenical church.

## PRAYER

"... prayer itself is properly an emotion of the heart within, which is poured out and laid open before God, the searcher of hearts." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* III.xx.29.

"Prayer is none other than an expanding of our heart in the presence of God." John Calvin, *Corpus Reformatorum* 37, 402.

The prayer preceding all prayers is "May it be the real I who speaks. May it be the real Thou that I speak to." — C.S. Lewis

Prayer oneth the soul to God. — Julian of Norwich

The fewer the words, the better the prayer. — Martin Luther

In prayer, come empty, do nothing. — St John of the Cross