



FLOURISH COMMUNITIES

Slowing, Unplugging & Practicing the Presence

“Several times during the day...ask yourself for a moment if you have your soul in your hands or has some passion or fit of anxiety has robbed you of it... Quietly bring your soul back to the presence of God, subjecting all your affections and desires to the obedience and direction of his divine will.” St. Francis DeSales

When we find we are being prompted to curb our dedication to busyness, hurry or media we know God is beckoning us to learn how to free ourselves in order to be fully present to Him every day. As we practice overcoming the pull of overfilling our schedules, taking shortcuts, or giving into impatience, we learn how to better keep company with Jesus and find fullness of joy. As we unplug from the influence of media and put boundaries on multitasking, we train ourselves to create needed margin to enjoy our relationship with God in uninterrupted ways. Unplugging calls us to leave the virtual world of technology in order to focus and be more present to God and to others. As we practice experiencing God’s presence living in us, we learn how to relate to Him more frequently and more fully.

How can you arrange your life in order to develop this spiritual discipline into a regular rhythm?

Try It - Slowing

- When you wake in the morning, before you rise offer God three concerns for your day, asking for His care. When your worries creep in, return to the moment in your morning when you released these cares to Him.
- Intentionally drive in the slow lane, or choose the longest checkout line in the store. What do you experience when you wait? Do a normal task more slowly and relish the time you linger doing this. Notice what thoughts rise and the emotions you feel.

Try It – Unplugging

- Each day do a technology assessment, keeping track of the digital and electronic communication you use, as well as the uninterrupted time you spend in the presence of family/friends. Do this for a week. What are you discovering about yourself? Is God inviting you to reprioritize in any way?
- Ask the Lord which media or technology He might like you to put away for a period of time each day. How can you use that time in other ways? What do you notice when you try this experiment?
- Instead of emailing or texting, hand write a note or letter to someone. What comes to mind as you do this?

Try It – Practicing the Presence

- Dedicate a task you are doing to the Lord. Talk with him about the task before you begin and when you are done. How are you becoming more aware of God in the process?
- When you are interrupted during your day and can tend toward being frustrated, pause and tell God, “I am here”.
- Set your phone or watch several times a day to pay attention to God. Spend five minutes reciting a favorite passage or sitting in silence. What was this like for you?

“If you can’t take time to do nothing, you’re a slave to doing. Doing nothing is a radical, revolutionary act. It frees you from the universal slavery of our age: slavery to the clock. The clock measures doing but not being.”
Peter Kreeft

Ideas on this sheet adapted from Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us, by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun