

# Spiritual Formation : A Spirituality Sufficient for our Vocation

## **Spiritual Anemic Cross-cultural Workers: A Reality that Must be Addressed**

- Thematic to our work
- Recent Field Leader findings. Those in leadership less than 3 years say their spiritual life is not well. 50% of field leaders acknowledge growing spiritually. Only 20% of leaders say that supervisors ask them about the well being of their soul?
- Most NA workers are sent into spiritual environs much more challenging, resistant and intense than what they what we experience in our own culture. Further, the complex array of stressors to everyday life and work depletes emotional, spiritual and physical reserves. The simplistic, catch-as-catch-can “devotional” life of most NA’s simply is insufficient.
- One of the primary works of God in the life of the worker is to invite them deeper into their communion with God. Cross-cultural workers go to see others come to God and discover God is after them!
- Spiritual Vitality is a topic that missionaries must be directly asked about, given permission to significantly invest in, and mentored in more meaningful practices.

## **Jesus’ earthly life - A Life of Service Marked with Balance**

The Gospel writers grant us glimpses into Jesus’ balanced and Father-dependent life. Mark and Luke succinctly detail a balance in Jesus’ life of giving himself to people then withdrawing to lonely places to pray and renew. Fascinating is the theme in the Gospels of Jesus’ personal pursuit of solitude in the midst of immense needs and a very short time frame to complete His Father’s work. Lessons will be drawn to encourage ourselves and others in drinking deeply that we may have Christ to give to others. We will rely upon Luke’s thread of Jesus’ withdrawing from ministry into solitude and prayer: 4:31-44

5:15-16

6:12-19

9:1-10,18, 28 (cf. Mark 6:30-45)

10:38-42

11:1

22:41

This is Jesus' model to us. If the Son of God needed and sought this solitude in the midst of enormous physical, relational, social and spiritual demands, then certainly we need the same balance.

**PAUSE: A time to record what is stirring in you**

Eugene Peterson writes, "Here is the clue to our erratic life patterns, our inconsistency, our unfaithfulness, our inability to distinguish between fashion and faith: we don't rise early and listen to God. We don't daily find a time apart for preparing for the day's journey. 'A very original [person],' says Gary Wills, 'must shape life, make a schedule that allows her to reflect, and study, and create.'"

"The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways...a prudent man gives thoughts to his steps." Proverbs 14:8, 15

"A person of understanding keeps a straight course (i.e. has purpose and focus)." Proverbs 15:21

- What is God speaking to you about thus far in this discussion?
- What are some growth steps you already know you need to take to ensure your own spiritual growth and vitality?
- Record a short psalm of prayer to God of your heart's desire regarding these matter

## Facilitating Growth

- Mentor/coach - encouraging some sort of relationship that nurtures them spiritually.
- Must resource for spiritual renewal events: retreats, conferences, books.
- Regularly communicate reminders to pursue solitude, time in Word, taking Sabbath seriously, read books for personal intake.
- Constantly granting permission for all the above.

## A Rule of Life

“Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name alone.” Psalm 86:11

A “Rule of Life” is simply a pattern of habits, actions, and attitudes. A rule of life seeks to respond to two questions: Who do I want to be? How do I want to live? A rule of life responds to these two questions with a set of daily, weekly, monthly and annual rhythms or practices that facilitate the practices allowing for deep transformation and maintaining holistic vitality.

## Designing a Rule

- Daily Objective: Attentiveness toward God
- Weekly Objective: Sabbath rest; Reflection on week
- Monthly Objective: Day of solitude; Reflection on God’s activity in recent weeks
- Yearly Objective: A spiritual-intake event or two

	<b>Activity/Discipline</b>	<b>How &amp; when; what resources needed?</b>
<b>Daily</b>		
<b>Weekly/ Monthly</b>		
<b>Yearly</b>		

## Resources

Two resources made available to you. Email Scott at [sshaum@barnabas.org](mailto:sshaum@barnabas.org) and ask for:

1. Extensive, annotated spiritual reading list.
2. A short document to guide a regular time of personal reflection. There are questions to be used for reflection with your team as well.