

### Weekly Reflections

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What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn?

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Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

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**Point to Ponder...**

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**Call to Action...**

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## Invest in your spiritual health: *The Divine Service*

<b>I wonder...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Why do we have Divine Services?</li> <li>➤ What is the format/liturgy of a Divine Service?</li> <li>➤ What is my role in the Divine Service?</li> </ul>	<b>I believe...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In the Divine Service, people come together to worship God, praise Him, thank Him, hear the Word of God, and receive the sacraments. (Catechism Q&amp;A question 613)</li> <li>➤ The liturgy of the divine service is the order and combination of music, prayers, Bible readings, preaching, dispensation of the sacraments, and blessings.</li> <li>➤ Through prayerful preparation, the listener is to accept the word in faith and put it into practice in daily life in thought, word, and deed. (Catechism Q&amp;A question 628)</li> </ul>
<b>References:</b> Bible: Numbers 6:22-27, Matthew 18: 20, Acts 2:42, Romans 10:17, 2 Corinthians 13: 14 ,Colossians 1:28, Hebrews 10:25; Catechism Q&A questions 370, 613-630, 643-653	

### 1. Why do we have divine services?

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### 2. What did divine services look like in the Bible?

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### 3. What does 'liturgy' mean? Why do we need a liturgy?

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### 4. What is the format / liturgy of the divine service?

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### 5. What is my role in the divine service?

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### 6. What are ways to prepare for the divine service?

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**Point to Ponder:** Another point to appreciate about the liturgy is how it is rooted in tradition and links us to our past. There is an element of heritage knowing that Christians, and perhaps some of our own family, have brought praise to God in worship, said prayers, received blessings, and celebrated Holy Communion together in the context of a divine service, like we do today.

**Call to Action:** This week, commit to at least one of the tips from question #6 as a way to prepare for upcoming divine services. Document afterwards how that tip impacted your divine service experience.

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## Invest in your spiritual health: *Introduction to Spiritual Disciplines*

<b>I wonder...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What are spiritual disciplines?</li> <li>➤ Why do spiritual disciplines need to be a priority in my life?</li> </ul>	<b>I believe...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Spiritual disciplines are behaviors and activities that help us train ourselves to be practically equipped to be sustainably engaged in a deepening relationship with God.</li> <li>➤ We want to deepen our relationship with God because we love Him and want to be with Him forever. Our love for Him and desire to connect are motivating factors for our desire to exercise spiritual disciplines.</li> </ul>
<b>References:</b> Matthew 4:2, Luke 5:16, Luke 6:12, John 4:23-24, John 7:15, 1 Timothy 4:7-8	

### 1. How does someone exercise toward godliness?

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### 2. What are spiritual disciplines?

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### 3. Why do spiritual disciplines need to be a priority in my life?

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### 4. How are physical exercises/disciplines **SIMILAR** to spiritual exercise/disciplines?

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### 5. How are physical exercises/disciplines **DIFFERENT** from spiritual exercise/disciplines?

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**Point to Ponder:** What are the biggest obstacles that stand in the way of making spiritual disciplines a part of our daily lives? How can we eliminate these obstacles?

**Call to Action:** Over the course of this semester, the discussions will revolve around specific spiritual disciplines. Already now, consider making a 'spiritual health plan' that you can develop and commit to, just like someone would make a health plan for their physical body.

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**Call to Action...**

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## Invest in your spiritual health: *Perfect Submission*

<b>I wonder...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What is submission?</li> <li>➤ What should I submit to?</li> </ul>	<b>I believe...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Submission means having the willingness to voluntarily submit to Christ and other proper authorities. Thus, we make a commitment and resolve to make God's will higher than ours.</li> <li>➤ As a believer, I am expected to submit to God's will and the teachings of the gospel.</li> </ul>
<b>References:</b> Exodus 20:1-17, Matthew 5-7, John 14:15, Acts 9:1-19	

### 1. What is submission?

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### 2. What should I submit to?

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### 3. Why is it important to recognize that I should submit to these authorities?

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### 4. What does it look like when I submit to God?

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**Point to Ponder:** Sometimes it can be difficult to not think of submission as always having to give up what you want. This can make submitting to God and others hard because you don't want to be restricted by them. However, submission is not a loss of identity or a type of slavery. Instead, submission to God in all of your relationships helps you to be free of sin and helps you discover the good plans that God has for you. Submitting to God deepens our relationship with Him, and submitting to other proper authorities frees us from pride or arrogance and helps us to be more content with them.

**Call to Action:** In John 14:15, Jesus says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." Read Matthew 5-7. In these chapters, Jesus teaches the gathered people about what His followers look like (i.e. what commands they should keep). Write down at least five of these commands and write about how each of these commands could help you submit to God and strengthen your relationship with Him.

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### Call to Action...

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## Invest in your spiritual health by: *Disciplined in prayer*

<b>I wonder...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What is prayer?</li> <li>➤ How did Jesus pray?</li> <li>➤ How can my relationship with God deepen through my prayers?</li> </ul>	<b>I believe...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Prayer is an opportunity given by God for human beings to enter into contact with Him.</li> <li>➤ Jesus prayed regularly and authentically in seeking a connection with His Father.</li> <li>➤ Prayer strengthens faith and trust in God, and provides the assurance of security in God.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Bible References:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Elements of a prayer:</u> 1 Chronicles 29:10-14, Psalm 51, Colossians 4:2, 1 John 1:9</li> <li>○ <u>Jesus' prays:</u> Matthew 26:39, Luke 5:16, Luke 9:28, Luke 11:5-13, Luke 18:1-8, Luke 18:10-14, John 17</li> <li>○ <u>Other:</u> Matthew 6:8-13, John 16:23, Acts 2:24-26, Romans 8:14-17 and 26-27, 2 Corinthians 12:7-9, 1 John 5:14-15</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Catechism Q&amp;A questions:</b> 630-642, 715-720, 722-728</li> </ul>	

### 1. What is prayer?

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### 2. What are different elements of a prayer?

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### 3. How did Jesus pray?

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### 4. How can my relationship with God deepen through my prayers?

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**Point to Ponder:** *"I used to pray that God would feed the hungry, or do this or that, but now I pray that he will guide me to do whatever I'm supposed to do, what I can do. I used to pray for answers, but now I'm praying for strength. I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us and we change things."* – Mother Teresa

**Call to Action:** In the next week, take the time to pray through a Psalm. Write down the verses and write your prayer to God next to them. Take time to reflect after your prayer: how was this prayer different from your prayer last week? Did praying through a Scripture passage help you to focus more on God?



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**Call to Action...**

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## Invest in your spiritual health: *The B-I-B-L-E*

<p><b>I wonder...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What is the Bible?</li> <li>➤ Where did the Bible come from?</li> <li>➤ Why is the Bible important to believers?</li> </ul>	<p><b>I believe...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The Bible is a collection of writings about God's activity, promises, and commandments. The author of Holy Scripture is God. Human beings, whom the Holy Spirit inspired to this purpose, wrote down what God revealed. (Catechism Q&amp;A questions 12- 13)</li> <li>➤ The biblical writings were collected over the course of centuries through the will of God and human contemplations. (Catechism Q&amp;A question 15)</li> <li>➤ Jesus is the center of Scripture. For a believer of Jesus Christ, Scripture comforts and edifies, provides orientation and admonition, promotes knowledge and faith. (Catechism Q&amp;A questions 25-26)</li> </ul>
<p><b>References:</b> John 21:25, 2 Timothy 3:10-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Hebrews 4:11-13</p>	

1. How would you explain what the Bible is to a friend?

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2. Who is the author of the Bible?

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3. How was the Bible put together?

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4. What does God teach us in the Old and New Testaments?

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5. How does spending time in the Bible help you INVEST in your spiritual health?

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**Point to Ponder:** How does the Bible affect my relationship with God?

**Call to Action:** Take some time for prayerful reflection and introspection, and ask God what He is teaching you in the Bible.

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**Call to Action...**

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## Invest in your spiritual health: *Studying the Bible*

<b>I wonder...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Why should I study the Bible?</li> <li>➤ How should I study the Bible?</li> </ul>	<b>I believe...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ I want to study the Bible to be confident in the truths of God.</li> <li>➤ A method to study the Bible is: SOIA (Survey, Observe, Interpret, Application)</li> </ul>
<b>References:</b> Deuteronomy 11:18-23; Joshua 1:8; Proverbs 2:1-6; Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:10-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Hebrews 4:11-13; Revelation 1:3	

1. With everything else I have going on, why would I take time out to give my attention to the Bible?

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2. How is the Bible divinely inspired?

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3. Is the Bible authoritative for my life today?

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4. How do I know that the Bible is truthful?

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5. What are you building your belief system up on?

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6. The Bible is such a large book, how do I go about studying it?

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7. Is there an easy way to understand what God is saying in the Bible?

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**Point to Ponder:** How will regularly studying the Bible shape my understanding of who God is and the purposes He has for my life?

**Call to Action:** Take some time to read the Bible, and ask God to help you understand what He has revealed about Himself in the passages you are reading.

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### Call to Action...

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## Invest in Your Spiritual Health: *Keep it simple*

<b>I wonder...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How can I make time for Christ?</li> <li>➤ How can I learn to be happy with what I have?</li> <li>➤ What should I get rid of?</li> </ul>	<b>I believe...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ When my life is Christ-centric, everything else will be added.</li> <li>➤ Everything I have is a gift from God.</li> <li>➤ Refusing to be a slave to anything but God, is freedom.</li> </ul>
➤ <b>References:</b> Matthew 6:33, Matthew 19:16-22, Mark 10:17-22, Luke 12:15-21, Luke 12:33, 1 Timothy 6:10	

- In verse 17-20, what do you think the rich young man understood as the necessary steps to attaining eternal life?  
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- What do you think is necessary for eternal life?  
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- Read the same story in Matthew 19:16-22 and notice the difference between verse 21 in Matthew and verse 21 in Mark. How do they differ? What do think the version in Mark is trying to convey?  
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- Think about what most of your time, money, and thoughts are spent on, and write down the top 3. Could these be barriers?  
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- What would your response be if Christ asked you to give up these 3 items, or if He took them away?  
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- Do you think the message in this story is that wealth is bad thing? Explain your answer.  
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**Point to Ponder:** Think about how and why you make the decisions you make.

**A Call to Action:** This week, choose one of the Discipline of Simplicity guiding principles and use it to make decisions this week. Be prepared to share with the group if it made life simple or more complicated, if it saved you money or caused you to spend more money, did it free up time or take up time? How did you choose to spend the extra money, time or freedom.

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### Point to Ponder...

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### Call to Action...

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## Invest in your spiritual health: *Worthy of Worship*

<b>I wonder...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What is worship?</li> <li>➤ Why do we worship?</li> <li>➤ How can we worship?</li> </ul>	<b>I believe...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Worship is our expression to God of who He is and what He is worth to us.</li> <li>➤ If the Lord is to be the Lord, worship must have priority in our lives.</li> <li>➤ God calls for worship that involves our whole being. The body, mind, spirit, and emotions should all be a part of worship.</li> </ul>
➤ <b>References:</b> Psalm 117, 139, John 4:23-24, Acts 17:24-29, Romans 12:1, Colossians 3:17, Catechism Q&A questions 301, 307, 370; Catechism section 5.3.2.3	

### 1. What is worship?

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### 2. Why do we worship?

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### 3. How could taking time to discover and reflect on the characteristics or names of God focus your worship?

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### 4. What are you proclaiming with your worship to those around you? If someone heard you singing or praying – would they believe what you were saying?

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### 5. How can we worship?

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**Point to Ponder:** What has changed in your understanding of worship today? How will you apply it? Will you study the Bible differently? Will you sing songs of praise differently? Will you approach a daily activity in a different way?

**Call to Action:** In the next week, take the time to think about how you worship. What do you think it would mean for you to make worship a greater priority in your life? Read Psalm 111 and/or 145, in which are listed several attributes of God. Choose the one attribute you feel you need the most in your life right now and spend a few minutes in reflection, worship, and prayer with that as your theme.



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**Point to Ponder...**

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**Call to Action...**

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## Invest in your spiritual health: *Fasting*

<b>I wonder...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What is fasting?</li> <li>➤ Why do we fast?</li> <li>➤ How can we fast?</li> </ul>	<b>I believe...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Fasting is removing something and replacing it with God.</li> <li>➤ Fasting helps us obtain a spiritual goal.</li> <li>➤ Fasting requires intentional focus.</li> </ul>
<b>References:</b> 1 Kings 21:27-29, Ezra 8:23, Isaiah 58:3-7, Jonah 3:5-10, Matthew 3:16-4:4, Matthew 6:16-18, Luke 2:36-38, Acts 14:21-23	

### 1. What is fasting?

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### 2. Why do we fast?

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### 3. How can we fast?

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### 4. Why should our fasting be kept secret?

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**Point to Ponder:** When we fast, things might become a little more challenging or we might find it hard to focus because we desire or crave something that we are purposely trying to resist. In this way, fasting forces us to rely on God in a renewed way. We are reminded that we depend on Him as our ultimate Sustainer.

**Call to Action:** Choose one thing to fast from each day for one week (if you choose to do a food fast, only fast for a certain time period each day, not the whole week). Make sure that the time you spend fasting is replaced with an activity dedicated to God. Journal about your experience.

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**Point to Ponder...**

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**Call to Action...**

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## Invest in Your Spiritual Health: "Service" or "Serve us"?

<b>I wonder...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How do I serve?</li> <li>➤ Can I choose whom to serve?</li> <li>➤ How is service a discipline?</li> </ul>	<b>I believe...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There is a difference between true service and self-righteous service</li> <li>➤ When we choose to be a servant, we surrender the right to decide who and when we will serve.</li> <li>➤ We must be intentional in our serving. It is not about doing service acts, but rather being a servant.</li> </ul>
<b>References:</b> Matthew 20:28, Luke 9:46, John 13: 14-17, Galatians 6:2, Titus 3:2, 1 Peter 4:9	

1. How do you define:  
 service \_\_\_\_\_

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humility \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

dedication \_\_\_\_\_

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2. How did the CEO in the story define:  
 service \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

humility \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

dedication \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Read the story about Jesus washing the feet of the disciples in John 13: 14-18. What message was Jesus trying to teach his disciples?

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4. How is this similar to Josh's story?

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### Point to Ponder...

Think about your past approach to serving and determine if your approach to serving was in the spirit of true service or not. What needs to change?

### A Call to Action...

This week, choose one of the ways to practice the Discipline of Service and commit to trying it for a week. Be prepared to share with the group how it affected you, those around you and the mood/climate of the situation.

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## Invest in your spiritual health: *Silence and Solitude*

<b>I wonder...</b> ➤ What is the purpose of silence and solitude?	<b>I believe...</b> ➤ The purpose of silence and solitude is to be able to see and hear.
<b>References:</b> Psalm 46:10, Matthew 14	

1. What is the purpose of silence and solitude? What does God want to happen during our silence and solitude?

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2. When might it be helpful for us to spend time in silence and solitude? Are there moments when silence and solitude might help us prepare for something?

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3. Why is spending time in silence and solitude so hard?

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4. What can we do to help create moments of silence and solitude?

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**Point to Ponder:** To practice solitude is to choose to be alone for a time and do nothing, to give up accomplishment. Silence completes solitude. Until we enter quietness, the world around us still commands our attention and distracts us.

**Call to Action:** Keep track of how much time you spend on your phone over the next week (you can keep track by writing down the times you go on your phone, or you can download an app that tracks your screen time each time you use your phone). After the week is over, consider how much time you spent using your phone. Was it more or less time than you expected? What other things could you do with the time that you typically spend on your phone? Now, over the next week, use 25% of the time you spend on your phone to sit in silence and solitude with God.

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## Invest in your spiritual health: *IGNITE*

How do the spiritual disciplines help you connect with God?

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How does connecting with God invest in your spiritual health?

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Why is it important to exercise the disciplines in a group and when you're alone?

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What are things in life that could prevent you from exercising spiritual disciplines?

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After spending a semester learning and discussing how to invest in your spiritual health, how will you approach the divine service experience differently?

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### A Point to Ponder....

- What is more important than my spiritual health?

### A Call to Action...

- This week, write a letter/prayer to God about the thing that stuck with you the most from this "I" semester. You can thank Him for Jesus' example in demonstrating how we can connect with Him, you can ask Him for help in staying committed to investing in your spiritual health - just talk with Him about it.