

## Spiritual Practices Signal the Reign of God

“Intimacy with God, as in the intimacy of prayer, will be the very nature of God’s kingdom. In the here and now, prayer creates connection and relationship with God, even as it embodies the sure hope that God is our eternal friend.... page 159

“All Christian practices work in this way. The practice of hospitality opens our hearts to those who are strangers; it anticipates that, in God’s kingdom, there will one day be no strangers. The practice of forgiveness cleanses our souls from guilt and shame; it anticipates that, in God’s kingdom, all will be forgiven. The practice of charity shares what we have with those who suffer want; it anticipates that, in God’s kingdom, there will be no more hunger, pain, sorrow, or fear. The practice of stewardship creates a generous spirit; it anticipates that, in God’s kingdom, money and possessions will cease to exist and that all is God’s. Practices shape us to be better, wiser, more gracious people now, even as these very practices anticipate in our lives and communities the reality of God’s kingdom that has entered into the world and will one day be experienced in its fullness... page 159

“Some may choose to participate in a certain spiritual practice because it is interesting, feels good, or gives their life new meaning, but every serious Christian practitioner soon discovers one of the deepest mysteries of these practices. Christian practices all contain within them the dimension of ethics—they all anticipate God’s reign, in which the world will be made right according to God’s love and justice. Practices are not merely spiritual activities we do to entertain ourselves. Practices enliven and awaken us to the work of God in the world. We anticipate each day, knowing that God is in the here and now, and anticipate, most assuredly, the human future in the Spirit’s reign of peace. No matter which particular road we travel, if we practice our faith in imitation of Jesus, the outcome will be justice. Our actions witness to this hope. Practices are the connective tissue between what is, what can be, and what will be. Spiritual practices are living pictures of God’s intention for a world of love and justice.”

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Missional practices are central to the hard work of discerning and living Christ’s mission. In the beginning they may feel strange or awkward; overtime they become natural extensions of who we are. We may have a tendency to gloss over or quickly exercise them. It takes time for missional practices to become the new norms for discerning and creating a shared commitment for living Christ’s mission in sacred community. Any repetitive action that leads us and our congregations to embody and live Christ’s mission is a missional practice. - LCM Field Guide