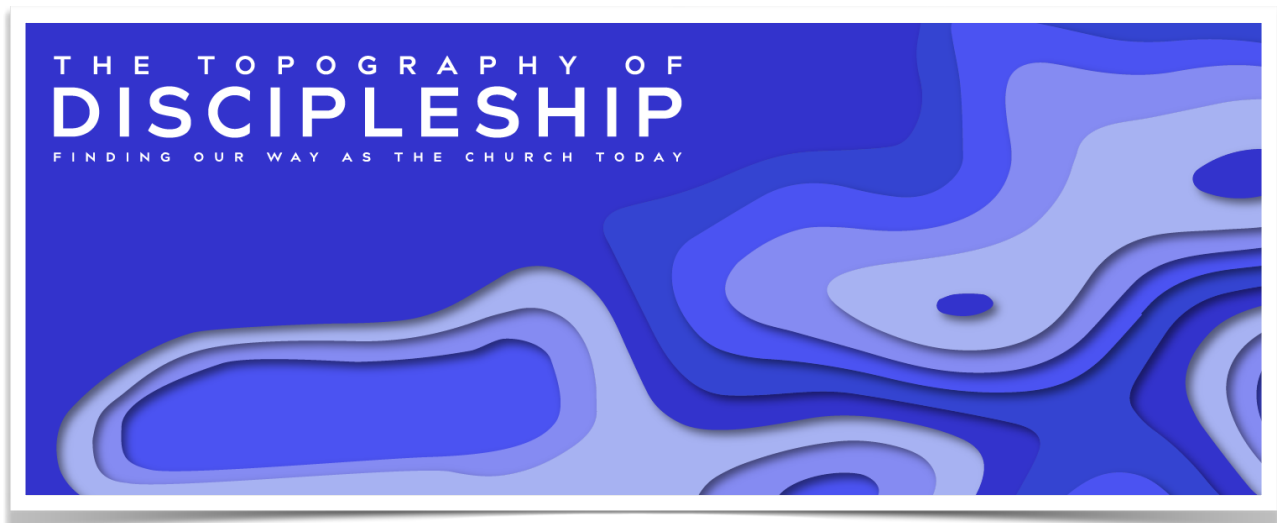


## GBC Discipleship RESOURCE



# THE TOPOGRAPHY OF DISCIPLESHIP

FINDING OUR WAY AS THE CHURCH TODAY

## Week Two | The Divine Context Part II

*For a brief overview of why (and how) to engage in each of these practices, you can read the Guideline For Growing on our website.*

<https://www.gymeabaptist.org.au/growing/pages/guideline-for-growing>

## OVERVIEW

This week we are seeking to explore the “how” of the Divine Context; time alone with God. This exploration has two applications: 1) Personal – how you and I can develop life-giving spiritual practices and disciplines; and 2) Community – how we can foster a culture where spiritual practices and disciplines are normal (i.e., easier to talk about, to receive support).

## 1. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What are the expectations that you bring into your time alone with God?
- What expectations do you feel are placed on you when it comes to having time alone with God?

- What practices have you tried that you've found helpful?
- What do we, as a community of faith, need to help our time alone with God become a more normal practice?
- What are you going to try this week?

## SPIRITUAL PRACTICES TO TRY

One of the obstacles to the establishment of life-giving spiritual practices is our lack of awareness of other options. What follows are five simple spiritual practices that you might experiment with. It might be worth doing them with a friend so you have someone to keep you accountable, but more importantly, to talk about the experience with.

Each of these practices are things that we can do throughout our day and with our children.

*\*These are taken and adapted from Adele Ahlberg Calhoun's Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us, Revised and Expanded, 2015, IVP: Grand Rapids, MI.*

### GRATITUDE

The practice of gratitude seeks to respond to God's presence in our lives and can take any number of forms. You might consider one or more of the following:

- Giving thanks for every meal, coffee, tea, or snack throughout the day.
- Expressing gratitude to others as a spiritual practice; saying "Thank you" can be much more than polite social convention.
- Deliberately "matching" a disappointment, criticism, or complaint with something for which you can be thankful.

- Setting a “thankfulness” notification on your phone; a time or times when you will pause for a minute or two to list, or bring to mind, those things for which you are be thankful and to offer thanks to God in a simple prayer.

## PRACTICING THE PRESENCE

This practice seeks “to develop a continual openness and awareness of Christ’s living presence” (Calhoun, 71) through intentionally turning (and returning) our hearts and minds to Him. You might consider one or more of the following:

- Dedicate a particular task to the Lord (e.g., cooking a meal, folding the laundry, cutting the grass, answering emails, attending a meeting, emptying the dishwasher). Talk to him about the task before you begin and again when you are done.
- Develop some prayers that help you stay open to God (e.g., a waking prayer, an in-the-shower prayer, a cooking prayer, a driving prayer).
- Set several notifications on your phone (as few or as many as you’d like) to stop and spend a few minutes reading Scripture, praying, or just being aware of Jesus.
- Practice the presence in interruptions. Whenever you are interrupted tell God, “I am here.” In this we are reflecting Jesus’ own ministry in which he was often interrupted (and some of his most gracious miracles occurred from these interruptions).

## MEMORISATION

To commit Scripture to memory is to “hide it in our hearts”; prioritising its truth over other things we might choose to remember. Memorisation requires repetition which is well-suited to daily practice. You might consider one or more of the following habits:

- If you receive a “verse of the day” on your phone, set a few times a day when you will seek to learn it by the end of the day. This may not lead to long-term recall of the verse but will enable you to reflect on a particular verse several times a day.
- Choose a portion of Scripture that is meaningful to you and seek to memorise it over the course of the week. Copy it out on a Post-It and place it somewhere you will see it (e.g., bathroom mirror, fridge door) and repeat it each time you see it.

## PRAYER WALKING

Walking in our neighbourhoods is one of the few activities we are currently allowed while we are in lockdown due to the pandemic. We can make this a spiritual practice by praying for the areas we are walking through; praying for the homes, the schools, playgrounds, and businesses we pass.

We can also do a prayer walk in our place of business or our homes. Walk through your home and pray for what happens in each room (e.g., that the dining table would be a place of gratitude and hospitality, that bedrooms would be places of rest and refreshment).

## FIXED-HOUR PRAYER

This is the development of set times during a day when we pause to pray for a few moments. This might be at the top of each hour (or as close as we can), prior to or after meals, or any other pattern that works for you (e.g., first thing when you wake up, just before you start your work day, at noon, just before you go home, as you go to sleep).