

Vineyard Women Mentoring Month Two

Soul Care

INTRODUCTION

As leaders we care for ourselves in order to care for others. Paul says as much in his farewell to the Ephesian Elders:

Acts 20:28 “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.”

Jesus tells us if we can learn to keep company with him he will give us rest for our souls. He tells us to learn the ‘unforced rhythms of grace.’

Matthew 11:28-30 The Message

27 Jesus resumed talking to the people, but now tenderly. “The Father has given me all these things to do and say. This is a unique Father-Son operation, coming out of Father and Son intimacies and knowledge. No one knows the Son the way the Father does, nor the Father the way the Son does. But I’m not keeping it to myself; I’m ready to go over it line by line with anyone willing to listen.

28-30 “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Definition Soul – John Ortberg in his book, “Soul Keeping” defines the soul below:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Will: The innermost circle is the will — the capacity to choose. The will is what makes you a person and not a thing. It is important but it is also extremely limited.

Mind: The second circle is the mind, a person's thoughts and feelings.

Body: The third circle is the body. "Our bodies are like our little power packs — we couldn't be us without them. . . . But they are not the whole story. We are not just the stuff that our bodies are made of" (Dallas Willard).

Soul: The final circle is the soul. The human soul is what integrates all of our different parts into a single person.

"A healthy soul is an integrated soul, and an unhealthy soul is a 'dis-integrated' one" (Dallas Willard).

In other words, Dallas Willard tells us if one of the above areas is not being cared for we are a "dis-integrated" soul.

Our "soul care" involves all parts of us. From Brené Brown's work on wholehearted living: "whole" shares the same root as "health" – "hale" wholeness is all the parts of us engaging in practices that lead to health and wholeness.

A few definitions:

Pattern: A regular, ingrained behavior returned to in times of apathy or stress

- Stressors/triggers: Know what sends you into a downward spiral. (Cramped schedule, lack of assistance, change of plans, involved in too many things at once, stories we tell ourselves – "I am the only one who can do this." "I haven't heard back so I must have done something wrong." "I know I should _____, but I don't have time.")
- Destructive habits: Where the downward spiral leads. (Binge-watching, poor eating habits, isolation or over-scheduling, etc.)

Practice: A regular, intentional engagement that leads to health and wholeness

- Positive and true stories (bringing our stories into the light: "The story I am telling myself is ..." and turning them into affirmations: "emotional support or encouragement" – What is the truth you need to hear or be reintroduced to?)
- Constructive habits (drinking water, taking breaks, going on walks, practicing Sabbath).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions:

1. Ways of refueling, gasoline for the car, energy for batteries, food for our bodies—what do you require to refuel and be nourished in each of the above categories?
2. How do you know when you are in touch with your True Self and in touch with God?
3. When you are quiet, what do you find yourself longing for most?
4. What places of my heart and life do I find most difficult to let God enter into?
5. What is the invitation of God to you right now?

Spiritual Disciplines

Read the following about practicing the disciplines. What stands out to you?

<https://www.soulshpherd.org/spiritual-disciplines-list/>

1. What Spiritual Discipline do you find easiest to engage with?
2. What Spiritual Discipline is the most challenging to you?
3. What other activities do you engage with for your own soul care?
4. As a leader, what is one thing you would like to share with others about soul care?