Spiritual Formation:  
*Along the Way with Jesus*

Christian spiritual formation is the intentional interaction of our lives with God, so that, through the power of the Holy Spirit:

- our thoughts, character and actions would be transformed into the likeness of Christ
- our lives would reflect God’s presence in the world, and
- we would become co-laborers in making God’s kingdom present.

**Being, Knowing, Doing**

Christian spiritual formation is a journey of becoming more like Christ. We make a decision to follow after Jesus, confessing that He is who He says He is – the Son of God, and then spend the rest of our lives growing in understanding of what He taught, developing our relationship with Him, and shaping our thoughts, actions and attitudes after His. It is intentional discipleship.

There are three areas of focus in intentional discipleship. While they overlap in practice and are interdependent, they remind us of three important aspects of our spiritual formation to be developed and kept in balance.

**Being in Christ – “Am I loving God more?”  (HEART/CHARACTER) - (exercises focused on prayer, spiritual disciplines, self-examination, contemplation, worship)**

Jesus calls us to “Abide in me” (John 15:4). Part of the mystery of our faith is the invitation to be in relationship with God. Like a branch rooted in the vine, we are intimately and fundamentally connected to God. Through the Holy Spirit, God is made present to us and dwells with us. We do not create this reality. It is God’s initiative. But as intentional disciples, we put ourselves in the position to grow in this area of faith, to become more discerning of God’s presence in our lives, through prayer, worship and spiritual disciplines.

**Knowing Christ – “Am I growing in understanding?”  (HEAD/THINKING) - (exercises focused on gaining knowledge of Scripture, faith or beliefs; understanding, background, thinking)**

It is God who reveals truth to us. He revealed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, and He continues to reveal Christ to us through Scripture and through the Holy Spirit. As intentional disciples, it is important that we continue to put ourselves in the position to grow in understanding of who God is and what He is about in the world. To know the Jesus portrayed in the Gospels. To know the basic beliefs of our faith. To discern and apply God’s direction in Scripture to our own context. To grow in knowledge and understanding equips us for service and draws us closer to God.

**Doing like Christ – “Am I loving others more?”  (HANDS/_ACTIONS) - (exercises focused on taking action, focusing on others, giving feet to our faith, doing)**

Jesus calls us to “Come, follow me.” If we are to be His followers, then we need to be about the things that He gave Himself to – helping the sick, the poor, the outcasts; ministering to those in need; putting others ahead of ourselves; showing compassion and hospitality. This is how the world will know that Jesus lives, because they will see that He is alive in and through us, His followers. And as we go to those for whom Jesus was concerned, we will discover that we find His presence as well, in new, deeper and often unexpected ways.

Being. Knowing. Doing. We need to be intentional about all three areas of our spiritual formation. Most of us feel very comfortable in one or two areas. But these three aspects of discipleship are so intertwined with one another that none can be neglected without the whole suffering.