



**SPIRITUAL FORMATION**  
**APPENDIX A: RENOVARE EXERCISES**

**PRACTISING THE PRAYER FILLED LIFE:**

**THE CONTEMPLATIVE TRADITION**

...focuses upon intimacy with God and depth of spirituality. This spiritual dimension addresses the longing for a deeper, more vital Christian experience.

**Disciplines include: prayer, meditation, journaling**

1. Pray for ten minutes each morning or evening.
2. Pray without words (in silence) for five minutes each day.
3. Pray a short prayer throughout the day (for example, the heyschastic prayer "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner" or the verse "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).
4. Set aside an hour that will be free of distraction. Use the time for solitude, prayer and meditation on the Bible.
5. Read a section from a devotional classic such as Augustine's Confessions, Brother Lawrence's The Practice of the Presence of God, or Madame Guyon's Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ.
6. Write out a prayer in your journal. You may wish to keep it private, or you may wish to share it with your group. Write the letter as if it were addressed to God, telling him how you feel.
7. Learn to appreciate God through his creation. Take a walk in a park or simply sit and watch a sunset. Consider the majesty of the world, giving thanks and praise for all of God's creation.
8. Set aside 15 minutes for a time of thanksgiving. Thank God for everything you can think of. Do not worry about intercession or confession; this is a time simply to give thanks.
9. Practise the art of listening to God. Meditate on a verse of scripture, being attentive to what God wants to tell you. Note the words in the verse. Does anything stand out? Turn the verse into a prayer. Ask God to teach you during this time of silence.
10. Hold people and situations before God in prayer. Take ten minutes a day to bring your friends and loved ones before God. Do not worry about words; simply imagine Jesus standing beside them before the throne of grace. Let God minister to all their cares and hurts.
11. Pray for the leaders in your church. Find a time this week to pray specifically for your pastors and other leaders. Ask God to give them special strength.
12. Take a "prayer walk" this week. Choose crowded urban streets where you can bless many passers-by with prayer, or go to a park or woods where you can rediscover that the earth and everything in it is the Lord's.



## **PRACTISING THE SACRAMENTAL LIFE:**

### **THE INCARNATIONAL TRADITION**

...focuses upon making present and visible the realm of the invisible spirit. This spiritual dimension addresses the crying need to experience God as truly manifest and notoriously active in daily life.

**Disciplines include: guidance, worship, community**

1. Choose a day this week to do everything in honour of God. Drive your car, answer the telephone, conduct the staff meeting, greet people and enter data in the computer to an audience of One.
2. Receive the sacrament of Communion or Eucharist. Attend a church that will be serving Communion. Receive Eucharist joyfully, knowing that Jesus Christ is truly present to you and longs to strengthen and teach you daily.
3. Remove the barrier that keeps God outside. Imagine that you are wearing full-body armour that keeps God's spirit out of the innermost parts of your being. Remove it, invite God in, and wait until you feel that the work is complete, giving thanks at the end.
4. Help your church organise an art show. Artists – painters, potters, photographers, sculptors, weavers and others – creatively express the image of God through their art. Some of the greatest artists ever were Christian. Organise an art show of the work done by members of your fellowship.
5. Attend a service at a synagogue on the Sabbath. It is difficult to understand many of the stories in the gospels unless we become familiar with the Jewish faith. Pay special attention to the liturgical aspects of the service.
6. Attend a Christian church outside your tradition. Other denominations can open our minds to the way God works and speaks to different people.
7. Bring God into your workplace by asking him to help you solve problems. This communication does not need to be formal; quick, silent prayers spoken before or during a telephone conversation or meeting are heard by God too.
8. Bless your home. If you have not already done so, walk through your house and bless each room. Most of us spent the majority of our lives in our homes and fail to invite God into them.
9. Visit children. If children live in your neighbourhood, make a special effort to engage them in conversation. Young children are so transparent that they help us see God.
10. Take God with you wherever you go. During the next few days make a special effort to be a "tabernacle" where God dwells. Cooperate with God to bring good wherever you walk – in the park, in your home, in your church – by praying for those you meet.
11. Invite God to your mealtimes. For one week, make a special effort to sense the presence of the risen Lord during our mealtimes with other people. It is good to open a meal with prayer and to pray for concerns that may be voiced over the meal table.



## **PRACTISING THE VIRTUOUS LIFE:**

### **THE HOLINESS TRADITION**

...focuses upon personal moral transformation and the power to develop "holy habits." This spiritual dimension addresses the erosion of moral fibre in personal and social life.

**Disciplines include: silence, fasting, confession, solitude**

1. Work on taming your tongue; speak only when necessary
2. Try a 24-hour fast to discipline your appetite. Eat no food from one lunch to another, skipping both dinner and breakfast. Modify the fast by drinking fruit juice and plenty of water. Use the time you save by not eating to read your Bible.
3. Resolve to overcome temptation with silence and prayer. Instead of fighting or running from temptation, stand in silence. Praying for God to give you strength.
4. Fast from the television for a week. Many people find television programmes addictive, and they are certainly time-consuming. By not watching television for a week, you will be able to discern its effect upon your life. Again, use the time you gain to try some other spiritual disciplines or simply to enjoy your family, perhaps playing a game or taking a walk together.
5. Be a "gossip-buster". Whenever you or someone you are with begins to gossip, quickly end it. Guide the conversation to a different subject.
6. Practise the art of speaking positively. Resolve to make two positive remarks about someone or something for every negative remark you make. Be careful not to get too far in debt!
7. Spend ten minutes each morning thinking about good things. Discipline your thoughts until they readily focus on the true, the honourable, the just, the pure, the pleasing and the commendable (Philippians 4:8).
8. Memorise the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2-17). These laws were sweeter than honey to the Psalmist (Psalm 19:10). Memorize them as a way to make them a more conscious part of your daily life.
9. Write out a confession in your journal. One of the best ways to get back on track after wrongdoing is to confess the things you have done or left undone. Be honest. God knows your faults and failings – you will not be telling him anything he does not already know! The exercise is for your benefit, not God's.
10. Do a "treasure" check in your life. Are there things that you prize too much? Jesus warned us not to place our hope in things that will decay and perish. The rich young ruler of Luke 18:18-30 kept all the commandments but lacked one thing: the ability to let go of his wealth. If you cannot freely give a treasure away, maybe it possesses you more than you possess it. Give it away and experience the freedom that comes when you relinquish a treasure.
11. Keep the Sabbath. "Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy" is one of the most neglected of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8). The Sabbath is actually God's gift to a frazzled world. Sit down with your family and discuss how you can set one day (usually Sunday) aside for rest and recreation. Refuse to do any work – even the catch-up housework that presses you. Allow yourself permission to do nothing, absolutely nothing.



## **PRACTISING THE SPIRIT-EMPOWERED LIFE:**

### **THE CHARASMATIC TRADITION**

...focuses upon the charisms of the Spirit and worship. This spiritual dimension addresses the yearning for the immediacy of God's presence among his people.

**Disciplines include: worship, guidance, celebration**

1. Search the Scriptures to discover your spiritual gifts. Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:8-11 list gifts that we are to strive for and exercise as members of the body of Christ. Read the passages, pray about them, and seek understanding. You may want to read a book on the subject.
2. Explore the "Spirit-empowered" roles. Ephesians 4:11-13 lists several leadership positions in the Church. Read the passage, asking the Spirit to direct your thinking to how you can best serve the body of Christ.
3. Pray for the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that we must "ask" for the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13). Do you feel that the Spirit is present and active in your life? If not, spend an hour this week in prayer, asking the Lord for the Holy Spirit's real and life-giving presence.
4. Spend time reading about the "fruit" of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 lists the fruit or "virtues" of the Spirit. The presence of that fruit is a sure sign that God's spirit is working in your life. Choose one fruit that you would like to see increase in your life, pray for its increase, and seek ways you can nurture its growth.
5. Bless others with your "fruit". What fruit of the Spirit is most evident in your life (Galatians 5:22-23)? This week consciously be a conduit for the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control that the Spirit has given you.
6. Allow the Holy Spirit to become part of your prayer life. When you are praying this week, ask the Spirit to intercede when you cannot find words to express your concerns and your joys.
7. Welcome the illuminating work of the Spirit. One of the Spirit's functions is to make the words of the Bible come to life. When reading the Scriptures this week, open your mind to the "divine interpreter".
8. Put on your armour. As Christians, we are given divine equipment called the "armour of God" (Ephesians 6:10-17). List the different pieces of armour and ask the Spirit which one you need most at this time. When the answer comes, ask the Spirit to prompt you to "put on" this piece of armour each day.
9. Really worship when you go to church this week. Walk in the door with "a spirit of thanksgiving". Sit in silence prior to the service. Meditate on God's mercy and majesty. Sing the hymns with enthusiasm. Fill the sanctuary with prayer. Above all, praise God. You may find that this practice infects the people sitting around you with joy and thanksgiving.
10. Pray for the Spirit to give you confidence in the promises of God in Christ. Begin by reading Romans 8. The Holy Spirit is able to verify your position as a child of God the Father. Let the Spirit teach you how to pray to God as his child, saying "Abba, Father" and give you a life of confidence before God.
11. Read Tony Campolo's book *How to be Pentecostal without Speaking in Tongues*. It is an excellent introduction to the charismatic life, focusing on the "vital aliveness" found in the charismatic communities while avoiding the excesses found in every Tradition.



## **PRACTISING THE COMPASSIONATE LIFE:**

### **THE SOCIAL JUSTICE TRADITION**

...focuses upon justice and shalom in all human relationships and social structures. This spiritual dimension addresses the gospel imperative for equity and compassion among all peoples.

**Disciplines include: service, submission, simplicity, secrecy**

1. Write a supportive letter this week to someone you feel may be needing a word of encouragement.
2. If you live with others, help out around the house. This may seem minor, but household chores are usually done grudgingly. Your willingness to do more than your share of work will be a real service to the others in the household.
3. Spend an afternoon working at a project for the homeless. Your help is sorely needed, even if you can only sweep floors.
4. Donate blood. We are giving the gift of life when we give blood. Call your local blood donor service and set up an appointment.
5. Recycle your rubbish. Caring for the environment is an issue of social justice. Recycling what you throw away increases the next generation's chance for a bright future.
6. Help a friend in need. Do you know someone who needs assistance? If so, help that person, whether the task is hanging wallpaper, grocery shopping, helping with a move, or fixing the roof. Volunteering to help is a simple way to care for your neighbour.
7. Write to your Member of Parliament or Local Councillor – and share your views. Is there an issue you feel strongly about? Be sure that you have the facts straight and are expressing genuine Christian concern, not just prejudice.
8. Join a prison ministry. Your local church should know about groups that regularly minister to prisoners (and their families) in your area. Contact such a group and go with them to visit the inmates, who often feel forgotten in their isolation. Jesus told us that when we visit inmates, we are visiting him (Matthew 25:31-46).
9. Address an injustice with compassion. Is someone being treated unfairly? Do not be silent when your words could make a difference.
10. Practise the service of hiddenness. Do a kind deed (for example, raking leaves or calling on nursing home residents) without being asked or expecting recognition.
11. Serve others by letting them serve you. Are you guilty of not letting other people do things for you? Hold a door? Buy a cup of coffee? Make a photocopy? This is a sin. It is a gift to others to let them serve you; do not deny them this joy.
12. Write a one-page response this week to the following question: What is the most pressing social justice issue today, and what position should I, as a Christian, take? Share the paper with other members of your small group or your mentor.



## **PRACTISING THE WORD-CENTRED LIFE:**

### **THE EVANGELICAL TRADITION**

...focuses upon the proclamation of the evangel, the good news of the gospel. This spiritual dimension addresses the need for people to see the good news lived and hear the good news proclaimed.

**Disciplines include: study, meditation, journaling**

1. Read the bible for 15 minutes a day. Choose a method of reading (for example, tackling a chapter or a section per day) and follow it. Let the Bible influence the course of each day.
2. Meditate on John 1:1. Write the verse on several cards and put them on your bathroom mirror, dashboard of your car, and in places you spend a lot of time. As often as possible, pause, read the verse, and meditate on the mystery of Jesus Christ as the living Word of God.
3. Ponder John the Baptist's role. Read John 1:6-9 several times, paying particular attention to what John was to Jesus (a "witness") and what his task was (to "testify" about Jesus). Consider how John's example can help you be more assertive in your proclamation of the gospel.
4. Read a chapter of the Bible before falling asleep. Reading from the Bible just before we retire for the night is a nice way to end the day. It also helps us awaken with the word of God on our minds. You may want to read the chapter aloud with your children, spouse or roommate.
5. As you carry out your regular activities this week, think about the following question: How has my newfound understanding of Jesus as the living Word of God affected the practice of my faith? Record your response in your journal.
6. Talk about your faith in Jesus Christ with a relative or close friend. Often we neglect to talk about our faith with the most important people in our lives!
7. Meditate on a psalm once a day. The psalms are wonderful prayers that help us commune with God. Let the words of the psalms be your words. Read them slowly, over and over, until they become your prayers.
8. Meditate on the mystery of God entering history. Read John 1:14.
9. Get acquainted with one of your neighbours. Simple friendliness can often afford opportunities to share God's goodness.
10. Describe the "living Word" in your own words. First read the description of Jesus' eternal and physical life that is recorded in 1 John 1:1-3 several times. Then put the same thoughts into your own words, writing them in your journal.