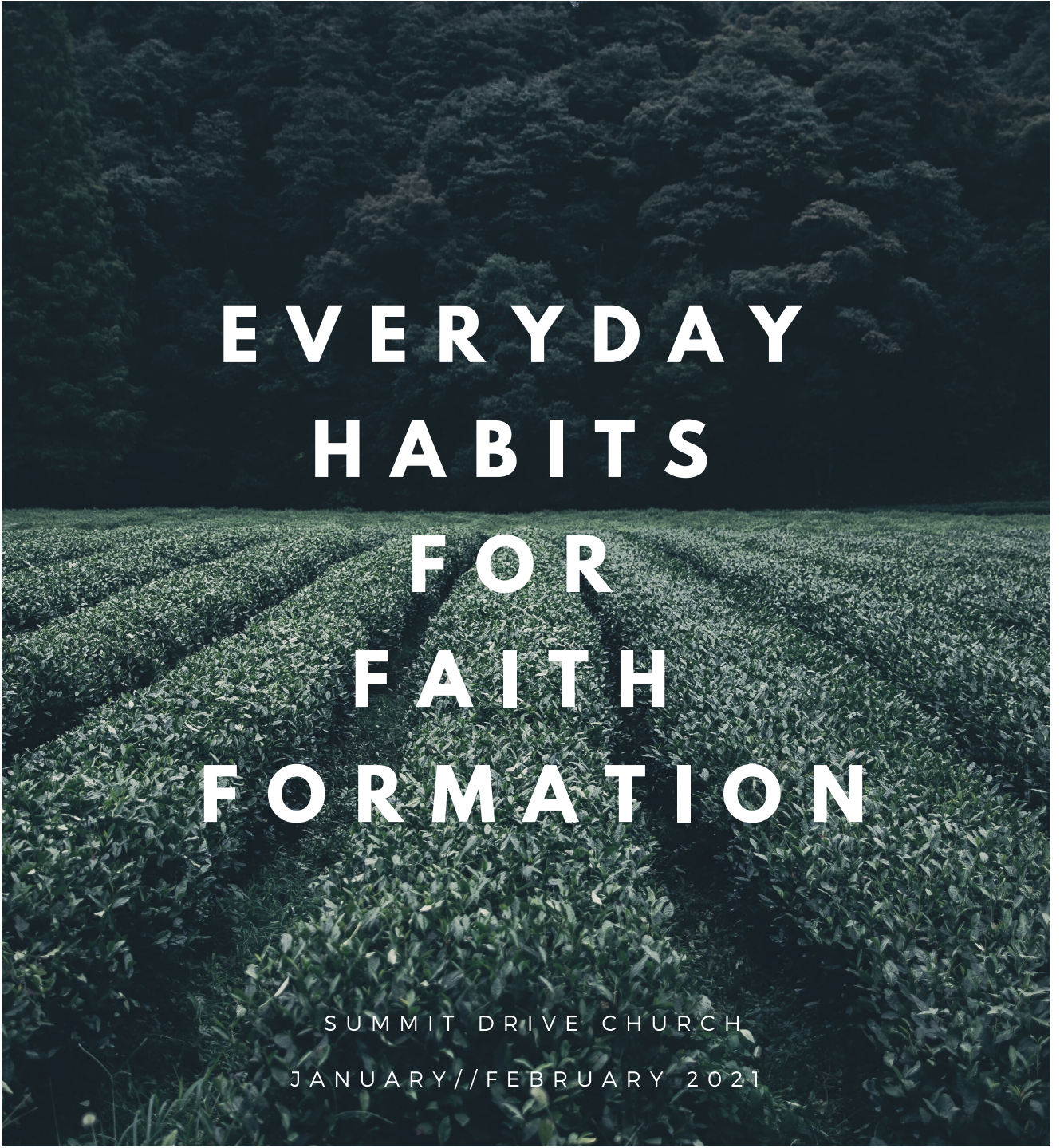


LOVERS

IN A DANGEROUS TIME



EVERYDAY
HABITS
FOR
FAITH
FORMATION

SUMMIT DRIVE CHURCH

JANUARY//FEBRUARY 2021



" BUT JESUS OFTEN
WITHDREW TO
LONELY PLACES
AND PRAYED "
- LUKE 5:16

PART ONE: IN TUNE

listening and solitude

One of the most frustrating moments for any musician is trying to play a song when your instrument is out of tune. What was meant to be sweet in the ears of the listener - to say nothing of the musician herself - quickly becomes obnoxious.

Our lives, too, could be described as being "in tune" or "out of tune" with God's design for human flourishing. When the Bible speaks about peace it is a sense of 'harmony', or being "in tune" with God, others, our own selves, and the rest of creation.

Living "in tune" with God comes from being near God and forming habits that align us with God's own ways and his heart. For those of us who follow Jesus, his life is both the source of our life and the model for living it well. To be a disciple of Jesus means to adopt his attitudes, his patterns of life, and his mission.

Our first study looks at how Jesus developed and maintained his connection to God the Father, and invites us to adopt or deepen these same practices.



REFLECT

01 READ LUKE 3:21-22

What does the voice from heaven say to Jesus at his baptism?

Compare this with what the devil says to Jesus in Lk 4:3.

How does Jesus' response to this temptation?

How do you tend to respond when you are faced with temptation?

How could a habit of reflecting on Scriptures help in moments of testing or in challenging situations? How have you experienced that?

02 READ MARK 1:35-39

In this passage Jesus faces another temptation. What kind of pressure was he facing? How have you faced the same sort of pressure?

What difference do you think Jesus' time of solitude and prayer made in his ability to stay focused on his mission?

Do you have a regular habit of solitude and prayer? Why or why not?

What difference might it make in your life if you carved out some time each day to prayerfully listen to the Scriptures and talk with God about your life and faith in response?

03 PRAYER FOCUS

Take a few quiet moments now to consider the texts we just looked at. Ask God to give you a sense of how to creatively carve out a time for reflection, listening and prayer each day.

Write down in your prayer journal (get one if you don't one) when you plan to make this space and someone who can be a prayer-partner; someone you can debrief your experiences with:

When I make this time: _____

A prayer-partner _____



**"NOTHING WORTH HAVING
COMES WITHOUT SOME KIND OF
FIGHT
YOU GOTTA KICK AT THE
DARKNESS TILL IT BLEEDS
DAYLIGHT"**

- BRUCE COCKBURN

**LOVERS IN A DANGEROUS TIME//
EVERYDAY HABITS
FOR FAITH FORMATION**

PRACTICE//SOLITUDE

Being quiet enough to listen

Isolation is a word we have heard a whole lot recently. Solitude is different. Solitude is about making space in our hearts and minds, as well as in the physical time of the day, for being quiet and paying attention to God. As we saw in the passages above, Jesus made a regular habit of withdrawing from a busy life in order to be with his Father. No doubt, it can be a challenge; especially when we have pressing responsibilities.

Read the following, discuss them with your family, a prayer-partner, or Life Group, and make a plan for how you may want to incorporate them this week.

1. Begin the day with God. Psalm 143:8 says: "Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my hope in you." Set aside some moments for quiet prayer and reflection to start the day. I like to pray the Lord's Prayer or recite Psalm 23. Maybe this means taking five extra minutes with your breakfast to read a Psalm in the morning, then praying it back to God. "Lord, you are my Shepherd - thank you for supplying my needs."



IN THE MORNING, LORD, YOU HEAR MY VOICE; IN THE MORNING I LAY MY REQUESTS BEFORE YOU AND WAIT EXPECTANTLY. - PSALM 5:3

2. Turn off, or set aside, your phone or device as you pray or read. Solitude is about being undistracted. In *The Tech Wise Family*, Andy Crouch offers this commitment: "We wake up before our devices and they "go to bed" before we do." This habit will help us give our best moments of waking and sleeping to pay attention to God.

3. Take a walk. Take time to slow yourself down and notice the goodness of God's creation. Thank him as you walk. Pray for your neighbours. Again, putting away devices for this time will help you be attentive to the world God made and that displays his glory (Ps 19; Rom 1).

4. Practice Prayerful Reading.

The Christian practice of *lectio divina*, or "divine reading," is a way of giving attention to how God is speaking to us through the Scriptures.

Although it's beneficial to read large portions of Scripture and study them carefully, we also need to remember that God, by the Spirit, wants us to encounter Him and hear him in very personal ways. *Lectio divina* can help develop this attentive listening and can be practiced alone or with a group.

a. Select a smaller portion of Scripture - a paragraph or so - and read it slowly; twice. Pause over any words or phrases that stand out to you. Circle or underline them.

b. Take a moment to pray, asking: How does this touch my life - speak into situations I am facing? (if in a group, share with your group members or family).

c. Ask God to help you put it into practice, and share what you were learning with a friend or family member.

Practice with some passages this week. Matthew 11:25-30; Romans 12:1-2; Isaiah 40:29-31; Psalm 46; Psalm 23; John 15:1-5; John 15:6-17