

# Gospel Community Guide

We labor in the abounding work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:54-58), we bring to full life that which is promised to us in Jesus as partakers of the divine; supplementing our faith (2 Pet. 1:1-11) not as a means to earn salvation but because we have it, are without fear, and are given all that we need to flourish in life with God and one another, to abound! *This labor we refer to as CULTIVATING: fostering our flourishing and the flourishing of others within God's gracious and growing garden.*

A way of living in grace by grace with persevering joy. For our faith in Jesus as Lord and Jesus living with us is a faith that transforms and frees us, yet in the context of creation in which our environment and even inner-personal identity is often the cause of much stinging—little deaths of sin and brokenness! We have yet full discovery of the promises and gifts of Jesus. Thus we doubt the certainty of our faith, we become disillusioned with the promises of our faith, disconnected from the relationship of our faith, and even disoriented in the direction of our faith.

In order to persevere, we practice faith or [Faith Practices](#), acclimating ourselves to life with God, in response to God. The faith practice of [Friendship](#) is one of these historical labors which envelop us into the very fabric of the garden life with God, relationship, by impressing within us the slow and steady cadence of garden life. Opposed to the hustle and bustle and instantaneous expectation of the circus, befriending requires us to have persevering patience and depth that can only be reached through proportioned intimacy. Friendship practices us in love, as well as expands our ability to love.

Unfortunately friendship is not something we are skilled at developing. Which is why we need a practice to help us befriend. That practice we call Nurturing. Nurturing is about cultivating a garden life within one another, helping one another discover what story we are living, what picture is shaping our lives by **creating space to experience, process, and cultivate our stories within God's Story.**

## 1 DISCOVERING OUR FAITH PRACTICE OF *NURTURING*

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The skill of Nurturing begins by dedicating time and space to listen. We listen to God, after all how can we attune one another's stories if we don't know God's Story in Scripture and in the Spirit (!), and we to listen to one another. Often we "Christians" meet to share knowledge and advice, but a Nurturing atmosphere is one in which enter with curiosity, listening to the Lord as we listen to others with the intention to discover what God is up to in the life of our friend: ***"In the shelter of another person's attention and God's all-surrounding grace, telling my story remove me."***

*Think about that last line. Have you experienced something akin? What made the atmosphere so transformative?*

## 2 PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

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Friendship is about recognizing a shared identity in one another. A mutuality that enables me to seek the good of a friend simply for their good and not solely out of any pleasure or profit I might receive from them. When we take time to see God in one another, something changes about how we see that person—regardless of what might attract us or even repel us from that person.

- 1) Begin by pairing up with someone of the same gender.
- 2) Now pray aloud at the same time for the Spirit to grant you both eyes to see & ears to hear for one another.
- 3) Spend about 20 minutes in conversation around the following questions.
  - a. Who or what has most shaped your understanding of yourself?
  - b. What are the sources of your sense of personal value or identity?
  - c. Think about the context you were born into, the relationships you grew up with or without, what/who your early influencers were, what you knew/believed about God.
- 4) Now simply pray over one another. Praying back praises to God for how you have seen his provision and grace in your friend's life. Praying back to God sorrow for the hurts your friend has experienced. Praying back to God hope for your friend's sure grounding in his/her identity as a friend of Jesus.

## 3 CULTIVATING GRACE THROUGH *NURTURING*

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Nurturing requires dedicated time, space and repetition. **Commit to meeting regularly with your DNA group for the next SIX months and honing your skills of Nurturing.** Remember down what you hear, think, feel, question, are convicted by etc.!