

## Session 6: Abide: importance of spiritual disciplines

### OPENING (1 min.)

Frederica Mathewes-Green is an accomplished writer and speaker. But she recognizes that anything she has to offer others come from Christ working through her. God cultivates that blessing as she dwells in Christ through spiritual disciplines.

God does not just bless others through our “human doings”. He also wants to bless others through our “human beings”.

### DVD: Abide (20 min.)

### CONTENT (pay attention to)

1. What is meaningful about Mathewes-Green’s icons?
2. According to Mathewes-Green, how do the disciplines help us minister to others?
3. What emotions do Mathewes-Green typifies her audience? Do you perceive the same longing?
4. How does Mathewes-Green say God will change the world?

### Meaning (discuss):

1. What is the danger of overabundance?
2. How do you define ministry success?
3. What are some good things, like family, which have become idols for you?
4. How do you encounter Jesus?

### LEARNING (20 min.)

1. Read Colossians 3:12-17; 4:2-4; Matthew 6:2,5,16.
2. In Matthew, Jesus tells his disciples how to give, pray, and fast. What did he *assume* about his disciples?
3. Does it surprise you that Jesus would assume all disciples would give, pray and fast?
4. In the Colossians passage, what are the two disciplines Paul encourages?
5. Why did Paul suggest these disciplines in the middle of a series of exhortation about how to do ministry and how to live together as a church? What was he saying by mixing things up like this?
6. Spiritual disciplines are sometimes called spiritual exercises, meant to strengthen us like physical

exercises. There are many types of spiritual disciplines. Talk about how the ones mentioned in these passages have strengthened you – Bible reading, praying, giving, and fasting.

### APPLICATION (6-8 min.)

1. Of the four disciplines mentioned in this passage – Bible reading, praying, giving and fasting, which do you practice more? Less?
2. Which spiritual disciplines most helps you sense God’s presence, most help you abide in Christ?
3. Can you give an example of how spiritual discipline strengthened you for the service of others?
4. What helps you consistently practice spiritual disciplines? What hinders you?
5. What spiritual discipline you would most like to grow in?
6. What obstacles get in the way of your consistent practice of spiritual disciplines? What strategies have you successfully used to overcome these obstacles?
7. Spiritual disciplines are supposed to strengthen us for service, but sometimes we are tempted to do them as to be more spiritual by feeling God’s presence. How can we make sure we do the former and the latter so we don’t turn into spiritual narcissists?

### CLOSING (1 min.)

Pair up and share briefly about the discipline we like to grow in, and ask God for help to do this. Conclude in a group prayer, asking God to give us a spiritual of service as we grow our spiritual disciplines.

### HOMEWORK

Mathewes-Green warns against overabundance. She fasts to highlight her dependence on God. Pray about what you can give up this week to learn about your overindulgence. Abstain for a day, a couple of days, or the whole week and report back on how God use your discipline.