



Five spiritual practices in a time of isolation and physical distancing

Adapted from Clark Buys' [Everything Eden blog](#)

With the arrival of Covid-19, the world feels like a completely different place. This resource offers a few spiritual practices that you might find helpful in this global crisis.

1) Say hello! Reach out daily to a friend or family member

In this moment of isolation and physical distancing, we're being faced with the reality of some of our primal needs. Despite our digital and technological accomplishments, we're fundamentally creatures of relationship and interaction. This moment is a raw reminder of how interdependent we all are. Many of us may find ourselves increasingly feeling isolated and alone for a while. We might struggle to remember and feel that we're all in this together.

So, how about getting in touch with a friend or family member at least once a day? A call, a text, a WhatsApp... Let's get creative!

If you're not at home in isolation, perhaps you want to intentionally say hello and smile to strangers.

2) Love thy neighbour

If you're able, perhaps consider reaching out to friends and neighbours to see if they need any help or support. Some people are offering to pick up groceries; some people are setting up community WhatsApp groups to keep in touch. Some are dropping off notes to their neighbours to connect and make themselves available to help in various ways; some people are offering a simple call to connect and chat.

Jesus once told a powerful story about a man who helped out a stranger on the street who was in need. In a way, we're invited to inhabit that story and make it our own, exploring what it means to be a good neighbour in today's context.

3) Turn handwashing into prayer

Jesus once used footwashing as a profoundly sacred moment. In many parts of the world, we're being asked to wash our hands more often than normal. We could use that time to stress or busy ourselves with life and our to-do lists. Or... we could proactively 'cordon off' that time for a quick and simple prayer.

Handwashing can so easily be a moment when we're absent-minded – thinking about something that has happened or something in the future. But it could be a beautiful spiritual moment, each time, if we stop, pause and pray.

You might wish to use that time to say The Lord's Prayer, or another prayer, or just look at your wet hands and think about how God is so present with you, with us all, that everywhere and everyone and every moment is 'drenched' in the presence of the loving and faithful God.

4) Quiet contemplative prayer

It's easy to feel frazzled in this time of unprecedented crisis. Quiet contemplative prayer can help when we feel anxious or unsettled.

Find some time – maybe between three and ten minutes – where you can have some peace and quiet with God. Sit down comfortably, feet flat on the ground, sitting upright. Take some deep breaths, the biggest breaths you've taken all day. Try just to 'be present' with God: don't rush back to what has happened, or forward to the future. Just sit, knowing God is with you right now. Then continue to pray. This prayer might take many forms. Here are some basic ideas:

- Centring prayer: if you're familiar with this prayer practice, perhaps you might wish to set some time aside regularly to practise it.
- Pray through the phrase: 'Be still and know that I am God'. Repeat it, but shorten it each time. First: 'Be still and know that I am God.' Then, 'Be still and know.' Then, 'Be still.' Then, finally, 'Be.' Just sit quietly 'being' with God.
- You might just want to 'practise mindfulness' in the sense of sitting quietly and choosing to be aware of God's loving, faithful presence with you in the present moment. As thoughts rush into your consciousness, just let them be. See those thoughts like a little river that you can't stop, but you can choose not to get swept up by the river. Just let specific thoughts float away down the river and return to being aware of the God who loves you, and your neighbours, and the entire world.

5) Notice and avoid escapism

If we're living more isolated lives over the coming months, it's likely that our body is going to be on a subconscious hunt for easy dopamine hits. This could mean, without consciously choosing to, we find ourselves turning to unhealthy things more than normal. Unintentionally, we could just give into activities that give an immediate dopamine fix but ultimately leave us feeling less settled, less peaceful, less healthy and less human. The forms of escapism are different for each of us. How do things work for you? Perhaps it's worth thinking about, and telling a friend or loved one?

Maybe the active 'practice' here is not only to avoid certain escapist behaviours, but also to fill our time with that which heals and restores and recreates. This might be simply going to bed on time, or exercising, or drawing or painting something, or playing an instrument.

The time ahead seems uncertain and unclear. We all have so many questions and we know there will be challenges ahead. We can know a couple things for sure:

We're all in this together.

And no matter what we're faced with, no matter the suffering, the confusion, the inconvenience, the pain, in the midst of it all, in any and every moment, we can encounter the compassionate, faithful God who loves us.