

# Spiritual Community

## The Practices of Spiritual Community

*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16 NIV*

***...confess—to each other...***

### **1. Confession is agreeing with God before others about the bad and the good**

*If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. 1 John 1:10 NIV*

***...your sins...***

**DISCUSSION:** What would God say about your life, both good and bad? What do you need to say about your life so that you and God are saying the same thing?

**DISCUSSION:** How are you building a spiritual community based upon the truth? Some of the great Christians writings about God were called “confessions”. What are some “confessions” you need to make about God? What truths have changed your life?

### **2. Acknowledging your sin leaves you open to the most positive outcome**

*You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. Ephesians 4:22-25 NIV*

***...pray for each other...***

**DISCUSSION:** Which person are you? Do you ignore, minimize, or forget about your sin? Or do you regularly acknowledge your sin and practice God's way for dealing with sin?

**DISCUSSION:** Remember a time when you had a positive experience acknowledging and confessing your sin. What happened and what made it a positive experience?

**DISCUSSION:** How have you put off your "old self" this week? How have you tried to put on the "new self"?

### **3. Group prayer is for people in the group to know God more and become more like Christ**

*...you may be healed...*

### **4. Prayer can change present possibilities into future realities**

**DISCUSSION:** Neal mentioned that He believes God takes into account the maximum amount of freedom with least amount of evil regarding each person and prayer. How does that make you feel when it comes time to pray? Does it help you wrestle with the way God might answer some prayers?

**EXERCISE:** Break up into groups of 3-5 and take time praying specifically for one another about each other's old self and how each one of you can put it off. **[DON'T ALLOW ONE ANOTHER TO PRAY FOR NEIGHBORS, PETS, OR ANYTHING THAT DOESN'T DEAL WITH ONE ANOTHER'S SINFUL OLD SELF]**