

Soul Care: SPIRE Plan

*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”
Matthew 22:37*

God cares about you, and about who you are becoming. It is therefore vitally important that we care for our souls, positioning ourselves in such a way as to allow God’s Spirit the most room to form us in the likeness of Christ. To be a disciple of Jesus means to follow and be apprenticed to Jesus, constantly seeking to become more like him in every area of life. To be a disciple is to be always learning and growing. Doing this requires awareness and intentionality—being able to assess the current condition of our lives and making appropriate decisions to create space for God.

To this end, we want to encourage you to pray through and write out a SPIRE plan for the coming year, addressing your health in the following areas: Spiritual, Physical, Intellectual, Relational, and Emotional.

While this may seem very structured and logistics-focused, three things should be considered:

1. This is intended to be a guideline and a framework. You may be inspired to think of other ways you want to grow and be healthy, while other prompts may not be as relevant to where you are.
2. You don’t just have to *add* structures in your life. Sometimes, God asks us to cut things, which may be both bad and good-but-not-the-best.
3. This should be undertaken in the context of discerning the story God is writing of our lives, *who* God wants you to become, what kind of person you’d like to be becoming. If it helps, take some time to consider your answer to the following question before you proceed:

Who do I want to be, one year from now?

Part 1: Personal Assessment

Take stock of the condition of your life so that you can be more aware of where God might be asking you to make changes or go deeper.

- Before you begin, take a few moments to pray and ask God to show you where you are currently in your soul care and where God is calling you to be in the coming year.
- Use Table 1 (on page 2) to rate your health 1-10 from this last year in each area of the SPIRE and consider the factors contributing to that rating:
 - What were the things that nourished you in that area?
 - What were the things that drained you?

<i>Table 1</i>	Score	Nourishing Factors	Draining Factors
Spiritual			
Physical			
Intellectual			
Relational			
Emotional			

Part 2: Plan

This will consist of several goals for growth and concrete steps toward them. We encourage you to share your plan with at least one other person (a spouse, a mentor, a close friend), so that they can hold you accountable and be praying for you.

- Again, before you begin, take a few moments to pray and ask God to show you what he wants you to see.
- Write down specific goals you want to accomplish in each area, e.g. “Lose 5 pounds” is a more attainable goal than “Lose some weight.”
 - Create achievable short-term goals that will move you towards increasingly larger long-term goals. Make sure your long-term goals are also reasonable and doable. Remember, we tend to overestimate what we can achieve in the short-term and underestimate what we can achieve in the long-term.
 - Try to keep your goals simple and achievable. Start where you are and consider what the next step would be for you, e.g. Don’t aim to spend an hour a day in prayer if you don’t even spend a minute right now. Be patient with yourself: growth takes time.
- In each case, think about what daily, weekly and/or monthly disciplines, practices or rhythms you could put in place to help you reach your goals.
 - Often when we start new things, they begin as disciplines (often challenging to keep up), but if we push through with them, they can become practices, then rhythms, and then habits. This is also why community and accountability are so important.

The SPIRE Plan laid out on the next page is intended to be a structure rather than a fill-in-the-blanks exercise. There may—and should—be other things that come to mind as you pray.

Things to consider

- Spiritual:
 - Do you want to pray more, spend more time in Scripture, sabbath more regularly?
 - Do you want to read through the Bible in a year? Or read through all of the gospel accounts? Are there parts of the Bible you’re interested in reading for the first time?
 - Are there particular areas of your walk with God you would like to grow in?
 - Who is discipling you, regularly (though not necessarily frequently) speaking into your life? Who are you discipling?
- Physical:
 - Do you want to eat more healthily, drink more water, exercise more, sleep more?
 - Do you need to have a health, dental, or vision check-up?
- Intellectual:
 - Do you want to try to read a certain number of books (fiction, non-fiction, any) or watch less TV/football/Netflix?
- Relational:
 - Are there particular friendships or relationships you want to invest in?
 - Are there particular friendships or relationships where forgiveness and reconciliation needs to happen?
- Emotional:
 - In what ways can you cultivate more self-awareness?
 - Are there areas or issues in your life where counseling might be helpful or appropriate?

My SPIRE Plan

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SPIRITUAL

- My regular prayer and Bible study time each day will be at _____.
- My sabbath day is every _____. My sabbath will consist of _____.
- Person I'm being disciplined by: _____.
- People I am discipling: _____.

PHYSICAL

- I will go to bed by _____ and get _____ hours of sleep per night.
- My diet plan: _____.
- I will exercise by doing _____ on [what days] _____.
- I will schedule appointments with these doctors: _____.

INTELLECTUAL

- I will develop a reading plan that includes these books: _____.
- I will attend this conference, workshop, event, school: _____.

RELATIONAL

- I will intentionally invest in relationships with _____ by _____.
- I will make amends with _____.
- I will create more healthy boundaries in my relationship(s) with _____ by _____.

EMOTIONAL

- I will journal or process my feelings personally during these times _____.
- I will seek to share my feelings with _____ on a regular basis.
- I will seek out counseling (professional, mentor, or peer) with _____.