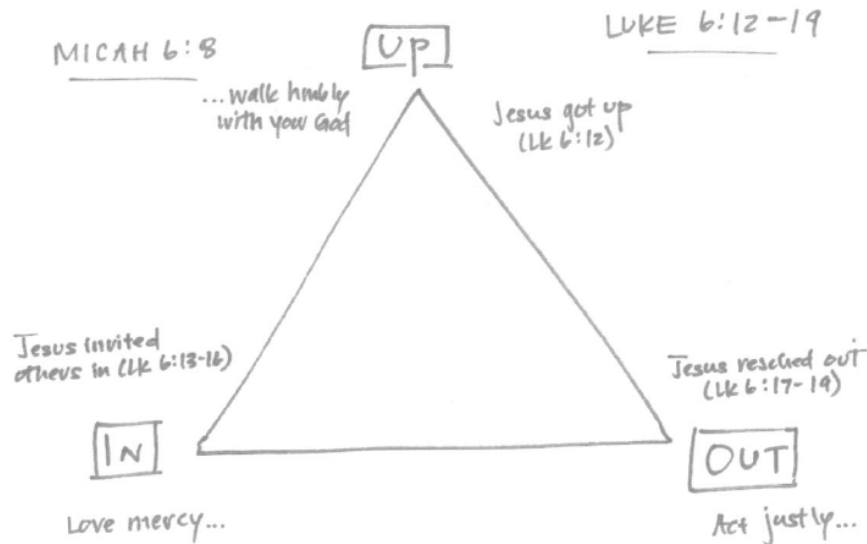


KEEPING SPIRITUALLY HEALTHY

*As disciples we are offered “life in all its fullness.” (John 10:10)
What does this look like? And how is it maintained?*

Luke 6: 12-19: 12 One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. 13 When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles...17 He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, 18 who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, 19 and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.



The life of Christ is our model for what this might mean. He lived the best life possible.

In the life of Christ we can see this fullness in the way Jesus lived out a balance between three relationships: with God, with His close community, and to the wider world.

Sometimes the three dimensions of UP (to God) IN (to community) and OUT (to be a blessing to others) are used to describe this.

In Luke 6: 12-17 we can see that Jesus first went up a mountain to pray (spending time with God - UP). From there, He chose disciples to be with Him (IN). Then together they went and blessed others (OUT). Why might it be important that things happened in this order? Why do you think Jesus only chose a small number?

In John 15 Jesus tells his disciples that they must “bear fruit” (OUT), but that first they must love one another (IN), and cannot do either unless they remain in Him (UP).

We see the same balance of relationships with God – community – others, in the Old Testament prophet Micah, who asks, “What does the Lord require of you?”

Three things: To love mercy (have peaceful relationships with others – IN). To act justly (be a blessing in the world – OUT). To walk humbly with your God. (UP).



I.D. GROUP RESOURCE

A spiritually balanced life is healthy and fruitful. The consequences of being unbalanced may lead to burn out, isolation, or being ineffective in the work God has given us to do.

For example, what might be the difficulties we face if we only pay attention to our relationship with God and close community, but never look outwards? Or if we look outwards with others, but don't focus on God? Or if we spend time with God, looking outwards, but don't connect with a close community?

Here are a few suggested questions to help you discern where God might prompt you to seek balance at this time.

Do a "gut instinct" mark out of 10 for the three dimensions in your life at the moment. Where do you most need to focus?

Relationship with God (UP)

There is no "fruit" without remaining or abiding in Christ. (John 15) What is your pattern of abiding? What might help you to connect with God? How much is your time connecting with God like a "transaction", and how much is it a connection?

Relationship with others (IN)

Jesus called a few people so that they could be with him. Who are the "few people" in your life with whom you walk as a Christian? Who is encouraging you at the moment? Who are you encouraging?

Relationship with the world (OUT)

How fruitful are you being for God? Where do you have the opportunity to be a blessing? Where are you taking those opportunities? Jesus went to the crowds (Luke 6). Where may you start going?

How balanced is your church community in these three areas?

