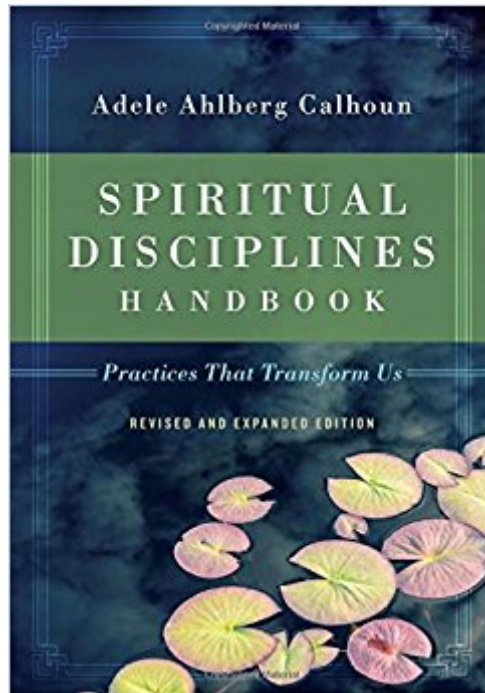




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# Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us



## Synopsis

Maybe you long for a more intimate prayer life or deeper insight from God's Word but just don't know how to get there. Or maybe you want to learn about new spiritual disciplines like *visio divina*, unplugging or attentiveness. In *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* Adele Calhoun gives us directions for our continuing journey toward intimacy with Christ. While the word discipline may make us want to run and hide, the author shows how desires and discipline work together to lead us to the transformation we're longing for—the transformation only Christ can bring. Instead of just giving information about spiritual disciplines, this handbook is full of practical, accessible guidance that helps you actually practice them. With over 80,000 copies in print, this well-loved catalog of seventy-five disciplines has been revised throughout and expanded to include thirteen new disciplines along with a new preface by the author. Mothers, fathers, plumbers, nurses, students—we're all on a journey. And spiritual disciplines are for all of us who desire to know Christ deeply and be like him. Here is direction for our desire, leading us to the ultimate destination: more of Christ himself.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. This discussion of spiritual practices that have defined Christians over the centuries certainly lives up to its name. Sixty-two spiritual disciplines or practices are explained, grouped in seven themes, including worship, prayer, sharing life with others, hearing God's word and listening to God's voice. Calhoun, a pastor of spiritual formation at Christ Church in Oak Brook, Ill., writes as

one who has lovingly studied, appreciated and collected some of the most influential Christian spiritual material over many years. Her language and style are respectful to Christians from many traditions—Orthodox, Catholic, reformed and evangelical. Readers could dip into this handbook at any theme or practice and find enough prayer and reflection suggestions to keep them engaged in holy mystery for a long time. The practices range from personal and introspective, such as engaging in silence and solitude, to extroverted and service-oriented, as in stewardship and care of the earth. Calhoun also offers a multitude of options for companionship—spiritual direction, a mentor, accountability partners, prayer partners, spiritual friendship and small groups. This handbook is a treasure of "tried and true" spiritual practices written well enough for everyone from the novice to the master to use. (Nov.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

"A practical guide to a wide range of disciplines from the classical practices of prayer, worship, meditation, and scripture study to more contemporary disciplines such as mentoring, journaling, unplugging, and accountability partners. A readable and accessible introduction to the practice of the spiritual disciplines." (Elizabeth R. Pearson, *The Christian Librarian*, vol. 52, 2009)"Encourages and challenges individuals with its specificity and personal tone. Welcome by anyone wishing to enhance life through discipline--especially spiritual discipline." (Carolyn Egolf, *Congregational Libraries Today*, January/February 2007)"For readers seeking to go deeper into the Christian life, or find renewal, or healing, or fresh insight, Calhoun's handbook will be a needed guide. Both the new Christian and the battle-worn veteran will find thoughtful, original paths to improve their walk with God." (Jim Miller, pastor, Vineyard Church, Nacogdoches, Texas, in the *Lufkin Daily News*, May 5, 2007)"[The book] gives a wide range of practices that can prove helpful for anyone." (Anita Cain, *Aspiring Retail*, March 2006)"A treasure of tried and true spiritual practices written well enough for everyone from the novice to the master to use." (Publishers Weekly, September 26, 2005 (starred review))"We are living at a time when the Protestant church is rediscovering the truth that transformation in Christ occurs through the disciplines of formation. Finally, Adele Calhoun has pulled all of these together into one volume, complete with clear definitions and practices of a variety of ways that God uses to grow our lives. No longer do you have to root through scattered pieces of paper, nor a chapter here and there to get the big picture of the tried and true disciplines. This is one resource you will want to have at your fingertips." (Greg Ogden, executive pastor of discipleship, Christ Church of Oak Brook, and author of *Discipleship Essentials* and *Transforming Discipleship*)"I love this book! Adele has provided a treasure trove of spiritual disciplines that will

nourish your soul, striking a delicate balance between accessibility and depth that comes from her own faithful practice. Read it, engage the disciplines and allow God to transform you in the deepest levels of your being." (Ruth Haley Barton, cofounder, The Transforming Center, and author of Sacred Rhythms and Life Together in Christ)"I have long profited from Adele Ahlberg Calhoun's gifts in the field of spiritual development, and I am delighted that she has compiled her experience with spiritual disciplines into book form. I highly recommend it and I look forward to using it as a resource at our church." (Dr. Timothy Keller, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, NYC)"Spiritual Disciplines Handbook offers a serious and extensive look into developing a variety of spiritual disciplines to help readers draw into a closer relationship with God. . . . Recommended." (Michelle Lovato, CBA Retailers+Resources, December 2015)

Calhoun gives a very good breakdown of a vast range of spiritual disciplines. Maybe the best feature of this book is that each discipline is treated within just a couple of pages, and encourages you to just get moving and try it. Many spiritual discipline books spend a great time talking about the discipline, with the result that you end up reading a great deal and never really practicing the discipline itself. Calhoun provides what you need to practice and get to know God better, which is essentially the reason you should be looking into spiritual formation books in the first place. I would highly recommend it.

This is a great book. I use it as part of my quiet time--choosing a discipline to read and journal about. The reflection questions for each discipline are thought provoking and insightful. I am sure I will be using it for months to come.UPDATE: I have continued to use this book several times a week. After reading through the disciplines that most interested me--contemplation, meditation, rest, silence, solitude--I began to branch out into some I was not as keen to read on--submission, compassion, humility. My fear in exploring these areas was that the book would begin to encourage a hyper-self critical attitude that would exacerbate my own tendency to find fault with myself. This fear has thus far been completely unfounded--in each of these areas Calhoun continues to gently encourage self exploration that leads to a much deeper awareness of motives to bring before God and ask for His direction in changing. Really a transformational book.

This book is amazing. I love the way the Spiritual Disciplines are explained. I took this book on vacation and I found it difficult to put down, It said not to read like a text book, but I found it difficult not to. I am part of women's group of 6 and I have suggested we use this book as a group study that

we are going to do starting this fall.

Calhoun's book is unlike any other in this area. Although it starts like others describing what spiritual disciplines are and why they are useful, the direction Calhoun takes is completely different. Her emphasis is very strongly on helping us express our desire to draw near to God, and to provide a number of practices to try which may help with this goal. The book is essentially a 'catalog' of spiritual disciplines, arranged around seven themes with the acronym WORSHIP - Worship, Open Myself to God, Relinquish the False Self, Share My Life with Others, Hear God's Word, Incarnate the Love of Christ, and Pray. For each area there are about a half-dozen disciplines (e.g. prayer includes breath prayer, centering prayer, contemplative prayer, fasting, liturgical prayer, prayer walking and others). For each discipline there is a helpful chart which provides a definition, states the desire or goal, shares some scripture verses, a summary of what the practice involves, and the God-given fruit that can come. For each there are also reflection questions (for yourself or group study), spiritual exercises, and a list of related resources for more information. Linear-thinkers or those with a more analytical bent may want to also read other books on spiritual disciplines, as several of these cannot be adequately addressed in a few pages. The author does a fantastic job balancing two objectives: to serve as a spiritual friend encouraging the reader to listen to their God-given desires to draw near to Him and point the reader in a good direction to fulfill these holy desires; and yet provide a thorough encyclopedic reference for the spiritual disciplines. Although some of practices may seem esoteric or mystical (and have parallels in other faiths), Calhoun is a very solid Christian and is not teaching anything that is contrary to sound doctrine. I would recommend the book for any Christian longing to know God better and looking to explore new spiritual disciplines as a means of spiritual transformation.

Invaluable resource! After purchasing one for myself when it first came out, I purchased about ten to give away and have continued to use it and recommend it to others. Tired of the old evangelical way of "quiet times" to connect with God? Did you know that time with Him could look any other way? Adele Ahlberg Calhoun provides a long list of spiritual disciplines that have been used throughout the church ages by those who seek to be transformed by the presence of the living God. Each discipline comes with helpful explanation and extremely practical suggestions for how to practice each one.

While the book itself is good, I should have bought a hard copy and not Kindle since this is a kind of

book where you need to go back and forth and this is easier with a hard copy rather than Kindle.

This book was received with such excitement and joy in our congregation. Many are using it for personal spiritual growth, we used it together for a major church-wide fast and we will be using it in future for retreats and similar spiritual events. It is readable for all and appeals to the hungry, deep places in each of us. Such a blessing!

Best book outside of the bible! Have used it for mentoring along with personal transformation. Excellent layout, biblically accurate and deeply researched. Love the brief concise chapter layout. Highly hands on and practical. Am working on some spiritual disciplines that previously have struggled with and finding new perspectives. Highly recommend this book!

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