

FOUNDATION OF SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION: A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO
BECOMING LIKE CHRIST

Name

Class

Instructor

Date



Want a Similar Paper?

Use a promo code SAMPLE5 to get 5% OFF
your first order

Order Similar



Accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior is a start point of a long journey in discipleship as a follower of Jesus. In Ephesians 4: 15 apostle Paul utters, we are to grow mature in Christ. These “growing up” is essentially the process of spiritual formation. In the book *Foundation of spiritual formation*, Paul Pettit defines spiritual formation as “the ongoing process of the triune God transforming the believer’s life and character toward the life and character of Jesus Christ—accomplished by the ministry of the Spirit in the context of biblical community” (Pettit 2008)¹. It entails involvement of the Holy Spirit in our lives and various ways we use to achieve spiritual growth in our lives. In a nutshell, it means engaging in certain practices and deeds that draw us closer to Christ. The book gives practical ways and means of building an environment for community respected spiritual development. Hull distinguish discipleship from spiritual formation. Discipleship refers to following Christ as a trainee however spiritual formation is the intimate work of the Holy Spirit² within ourselves.

The Christian concept of community.

The term refers to people who share something in common. According to Gordon Johnston, Biblical concept of community dwells on the human experiencing community with God and with one another³. Spiritual formation is not about our individual growth in Christ. On the contrary, it

¹ Pettit, Paul. 2008. *Foundations of spiritual formation: a community approach to becoming like Christ*. Texas: Kregel publications. (24)

²

Hull.B. 2010. *Spiritual formation from inside out*. IN a. Andrews(ED), *The Kingdom Life: A practical theology of discipleship and spiritual formation*. Colorado Spring, CO: NavPress.

³

Pettit, Paul. 2008. *Foundations of spiritual formation: a community approach to becoming like Christ*. texas: Kregel publications. (74)

involves growing in faith in the community of those who share our beliefs. Having companionship is the start of accountability in the discipline of growth in Christ. However, sin separates us from God and one another as depicted by the story of Eve and Adam. Through redemption, God restores community among the faithful, and between one another. In Mark 12:29-31, Jesus emphasizes the significance of having relations with God and with others. It is a necessity for devotees to show affection towards their neighbors as much as they love themselves. In true Spiritual formation Christ followers learn to nurture right relations with the Creator, themselves, and others as their actions and deeds should be of Christ-likeness.

Reid Kisling discusses character as a concept in spiritual formation. As followers of Christ, our characters and attributes should preside us. The only way to identify the characters that we should be identified with is by studying the character of God himself. We should emulate his ways just as we were created in his likeness. In Michael 6:8, God directs us "To act justly and to love mercy and walk humbly with your God". Humility, mercy, and just are the most prudent behaviors in achieving spiritual formation. The Bible teaches the importance of discipline in Christian life especially in line with self-control. Stunted growth in spiritual formation has been attributed unwillingness to change in values, way of life, and characters when we become Christians. Jesus came to restore our relationship with God and his image in humankind. The first important step is understanding what good character entails. We have several character education programs. According to Reid Kisling, these programs are established to develop the character in young people that is significant for good citizenship. (Pettit 2008)⁴

4

Ibid. (147)

How do we achieve these primary goals of spiritual formation in our lives as Christians?

My action plan entails;

- Reflecting on my strong characters and how I can use them to grow spiritually (Understanding spiritual growth)
- Commit to growing my weakest characters (Connecting with self)
- Devote time to pray to the Holy Spirit and seek guidance on my actions (Connecting with God).
- Devote time for fellowship with my friends and community (Connecting with the church and others)
- Minister the word of God to fellow believers and non-believers (Discipleship).

My action of the plan in achieving total spiritual formation include ministering. Through participating in God's mission of pulling us back toward him, my faith in him will deepen. I will also minister through my personal vocation. My daily actions and activities should portray my faith. Galatians 5:22,23 talks of appealing to the Holy Spirit to transform us to generate spiritual fruits of love, happiness, harmony, endurance, goodness, compassion and self-control. I will choose to emulate Jesus as my teacher and supervisor. In what I do, think, and say I will call upon Jesus to guide me. This ensures I utilize my character in my journey of spiritual formation. I will offer my friend to all, support and share in their ups and downs. According to Reid Kisling, the character of cooperativeness include "tolerance, empathy, helpfulness, compassion, and ethical interaction with other" (Pettit 2008)⁵ Equally, I will appreciate everyone God brings into my life

⁵ Pettit, Paul. 2008. *Foundations of spiritual formation: a community approach to becoming like Christ*. Texas: Kregel publications. (151)

in this journey of spiritual formation. Encouraging others to follow and learn more about knowing and serving God. Through sharing my testimonies as a Christian and how it feels to be in God's presence. I will commit to helping those who are younger in spiritual growth. I could volunteer with a ministry that will require my gifts, interests, and experience. As Christians, we grow more by discipline one another. in the concept of community in (Pettit 2008)⁶ Spiritual formation it will be of utmost value to build a Christ-like relationship with others. This also ensures accountability to oneself and others.

To achieve spiritual formation, we must be prepared to change the pattern of our lives to practice the will and purposes of God. Any kind of action that draws us away from the lord and his truthful ways can have detrimental effects, derailing our spiritual growth journey. As a result, cutting us off from God's plan for our sanctification. Spiritual formation, however, cannot be confined at the individual level (Teo 2017)⁷. It has a progressive element which enables the community to convey change and restoration all humankind. However, this can only be achieved if true transformation occurs at the personal level. According to Scripture, the Holy Spirit work in us through three dimensions. The Holy Spirit works on us individually. He transforms us spiritually into the image of Christ from within. Secondly, the Holy Spirit influence us to build a community that acts as a church that makes God's presence felt and his glory manifest around the

⁶ Pettit, Paul. 2008. *Foundations of spiritual formation: a community approach to becoming like Christ*. Texas: Kregel publications. (84)

⁷Teo, Wilson. 2017. "Christian Spiritual Formation." *Emerging Leadership Journeys* (Regent University) 142.

world. Lastly, the Holy Spirit manifests itself in us through prophecy and communities. These aid in spreading of the gospel. The gospel transforms the lives of the people and communities.

My advice to anyone planning to join seminary is that this being a place that forms a community with people who desires to follow Christ it is the best starting point in your spiritual journey. It is true spiritual growth, and maturation needs spiritual formation and guidance. A seminary provides a good Christian model and tuition for life and ministry. Seminaries are committed to advanced training in biblical and theological studies. Spiritual formation programs will ensure the advancement of the one's spiritual lives. Another immeasurable benefit is the experience of sharing the journey of discipleship in the seminary with fellow believers. This creates a sense of community within school life (Pettit 2008)⁸. The atmosphere and opportunities for spiritual development in seminaries can only be fully realized when experienced in the context of a Holy-Spirit –driven community. (Averback 2018)⁹.

⁸ Pettit, Paul. 2008. *Foundations of spiritual formation: a community approach to becoming like Christ*. Texas: Kregel publications. (87)

⁹

Averback, Richard. 2018. "Spirit, Community, and Mission: A Biblical Theology for Spiritual Formation." *Spiritual Formation and Soul Care*(45).

Bibliography

Averback, Richard. 2018. "Spirit, Community, and Mission: A Biblical Theology for Spiritual Formation." *Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 27-53.

Hull, Bill. 2010. *Spiritual formation from inside out. in a. andrews(ed), the kingdom life: a practical theology of discipleship and spiritual formation*. Colorado: NavPress.

Pettit, Paul. 2008. *Foundations of spiritual formation: a community approach to becoming like Christ*. Texas: Kregel publications.

Teo, Wilson. 2017. "Christian Spiritual Formation." *Emerging Leadership Journeys* (Regent University) 138-150.