

# Spiritual Discipline of Celebration

*“May the Son of God who is already formed in you grow in you - so that for you he will become immeasurable, and that in you he will become laughter, exultation, the fullness of joy which no one can take from you.”*

*Isaac of Stella*

God celebrates. He invented delight, joy and celebration. And one way we engage in the spiritual life is through celebration. Whether solemn or exhilarating, formal or spontaneous, celebration can enlarge our capacity to enjoy and serve God.

Celebrating God does not depend on our circumstance or feeling happy. To set our hearts on joy reminds us that we can choose how we respond to any moment. We can search for God in all circumstances or we cannot.

Set your eyes on God as you celebrate. God delights in all kinds of worship.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Where are you most prone to celebrate God? Alone? With others? In worship? In music? In nature?
2. What does this tell you about how God made you and how you most naturally meet with him?
3. How is your celebration enhanced or curtailed by your ability to remember the past, live in the moment or anticipate the future?
4. When you see others celebrating God in a way that is new or foreign to you, what goes on in your mind and heart?
5. If there is a heaviness about you, an overly serious side or an entrenched critical spirit, how might celebrating God affect these traits and move you into new areas of transformation?
6. Who do you know who really celebrates life and God? What attracts you to them?

## **SPIRITUAL EXERCISES**

1. Identify the place you most readily connect with God. Is it in nature, listening to Christian music, participating in corporate worship or Solitude? Go to that place in your mind. What do you want to tell God about the joy you receive here?
2. Intentionally place yourself in the presence of God. Recall all of God's gifts, provisions, guidance and love toward you. To celebrate God's grace to you, write a song of celebration, make a collage that represents your joy, write a poem of praise, play music and dance before the Lord, or memorise a verse of praise and repeat it all through the coming days.
3. Consider how God loves you. Read Zephaniah 3:17. Then be still and listen How is God celebrating you? Celebrate the God who celebrates you. Intentionally ask for the gift of appreciating yourself the way God does.
4. Think about ways you can celebrate Easter this year and other events on the church calendar (eg Pentecost, advent etc) Plan a way of celebrating God alone or with family (remembering the social distancing guidelines).
5. Attend to the people who give you joy. Ask God how you might celebrate them in a way that encourages them and reminds them how precious they are to you and to God.

### **Resources on Celebration**

*Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster, Chapter 13 "Celebration"

### **Reference**

Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (IVP Books, Illinois 2005) pages 28-30