

# Relational Pathway

## **Characteristics:**

- Spiritual growth comes most naturally when you're involved in significant relationships.
- Small groups and other community life experiences are key.
- Your life is an open book and you're surprised when others aren't as open as you are.
- Being alone can drive you crazy.
- In times of growth (like confronting sin, guidance for decisions, accountability, expressions of love, etc.) God will often speak to you through other people.

## **Build on Strengths:**

- You need a relationally rich life.
- Use your spiritual gift to serve others.
- Pray with others in community.
- Learn in a class with other people or in a small group.
- Guard against superficiality.
- Be sure to have a few deep relationships – people who love you, challenge you, encourage you, and give you wise counsel.
- You can grow dependent on others and become a spiritual chameleon (you change depending on who you're with).

## **Ways to Stretch:**

- Develop a capacity for silence.
- Learn to develop solitude time with God.
- Monitor your talking, don't talk all the time!
- Keep some of your experiences with God secret so you don't get addicted to what other people think.
- Study Scripture for yourself so you're not so dependent on the opinion of others.
- Invite close friends to speak words of truth to you. Be accountable to a leader.

# Intellectual Pathway

## **Characteristics:**

- You draw close to God as you're able to learn more about Him.
- The study of Scripture and theology comes naturally to you.
- You are a thinker (thinking trumps feeling), and inclined to loving God with all your mind (and heart and soul). (Matt.22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27)
- You receive God's Word with all eagerness, and are keen to examine the Scriptures for yourself (Acts 17:11)
- When you face problems or spiritual challenges, you go into a problem-solving mode.

*The road to your heart usually leads through your head – you hear God best as you learn; you \]come to life when you're deeply immersed in great books, classes, deep thought, new learning...*

## **Build on Strengths:**

- Read great books (theological and spiritual) that challenge you.
- Expose yourself to sound biblical teaching (seminary classes, sermon/teaching podcasts etc)
- Find like-minded people with whom you can read and study God's Word together.

## **Some Cautions:**

- Guard against becoming all head and no heart.
- Don't confuse being knowledgeable with being spiritually mature.
- Remember that the right gauge of spiritual health and maturity is love, not intelligence or knowledge.
- You love to be right and that can be dangerous.

## **Ways to Stretch:**

- Devote yourself to corporate worship and private adoration and prayer – let your learning lead to worship, loving God with your mind lead to loving Him with your heart and soul.
- Engage in self-examination to assess whether or not you are being loving as you interact with and/or study the Word with others.
- Consider how what you know from studying God's Word makes a difference to your life.
- Give permission to spiritually mature friends you trust, to allow them to speak into your life with encouragement and feedback to help you grow in your spiritual maturity.

# Worship Pathway

## **Characteristics:**

- You have a deep love of corporate praise and a natural inclination toward celebration.
- In difficult periods of life, worship is one of the most healing activities you engage in.
- In worship, your heart opens up and you come alive and enthusiastically participate.
- You grow in knowing God and encountering Him through worshipping Him in Psalms, Hymns and spiritual songs. (Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16)

## **Build on Strengths:**

- Experience worship on a regular basis.
- Surround with songs of worship at home, workplace, and when on the move.
- Learn about other worship traditions and their devotion and incorporate what you learn into your personal worship time.
- Go beyond the music to meditate on the words of the songs, especially when it is quoted from the Bible, and let the Word sink in your heart.

## **Some Cautions:**

- Be careful not to judge those who aren't as expressive as you in worship – don't assume they don't love God as much or aren't experiencing the Holy Spirit.
- Guard against an experience-based spirituality that always has you looking for the next "high."
- Take note and beware of lyrics that are not in line with the Scriptures and discuss with spiritually mature persons about them when you are unsure.

## **Ways to Stretch:**

- Engage in the discipline of study – make sure your mind is filled with knowledge of God and to keep that area growing so that your heart and emotions are solidly rooted.
- Commit to be transformed in the way you think and live according to the will of God, by offering Him yourself as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to Him, which is your spiritual worship. (Romans 12:1-2)
- Serve God in concrete ways as an extension of your worship.
- Remain committed to your community of faith even when worship isn't all you'd like it to be.

# Contemplative Pathway

## **Characteristics:**

- You love uninterrupted time alone.
- Reflection on God's Word comes naturally to you.
- You have a large capacity for prayer.
- If you get busy or spend a lot of time with people, you feel drained and yearn for times of solitude.
- Presence of God is most real when all distractions are removed.

## **Build on Strengths:**

- Set aside regular time for solitude and stillness in God's presence.
- Centre your times of solitude upon God's Word. Journal down your reflections, and promptings from the Lord.
- Read up on and consider engaging in enduring spiritual practices (such as lectio divina and examen) that have helped generations of Christ's disciples to spend time in self-examination and contemplation on Him.
- Ask the Lord how you can apply and act on what you hear from Him in the silence.

## **Some Cautions:**

- You have a tendency to avoid the demands of the real world because they don't live up to your ideals.
- Be careful not to retreat to your inner world when friends, family, or society disappoint you.
- Resist the temptation to consider your times of private prayer and solitude as less important than the more public acts of ministry performed by others. Jesus Himself often withdrew to quiet places to pray amidst His very packed schedule.

## **Ways to Stretch:**

- Prayerfully commit to serving the Lord in an area of ministry.
- Serve the Lord out of the strength and refreshment you glean from your personal time with the Lord.
- Stay plugged into Christian community (eg. small group, discipling relationship, friends, loved ones who are spiritually mature), even when those relationships become difficult or challenging.

# Serving Pathway

## **Characteristics:**

- God's presence seems most tangible when you're involved in helping others.
- You're often uncomfortable in a setting where you don't have a role (but if you have a role like setting up chairs, etc. you're more comfortable).
- You constantly look for acts of service you can engage in and often don't even need to be asked.
- Love doing practical tasks at the church or volunteering. You connect with God when you are serving, God's presence seems most tangible when you are helping other.

## **Build on Strengths:**

- Get plugged into a community so you have opportunities for meaningful service.
- Look for glimpses of God's presence in the people you serve, and in the execution of your tasks.
- Prepare to serve first by praying so your service is genuinely spiritual service.
- Cultivate an awareness of those moments when you sense God with you as you serve.

## **Some Cautions**

- Be careful not to resent other people who don't serve as much as you do.
- Remember that God loves you not because you are so faithful in serving Him, but because you are His beloved child.
- Don't confuse serving with earning God's love.

## **Ways to Stretch:**

- Balance your service with small group and community life.
- Learn to receive love even when you're not being productive.
- Practice expressing love through words as well as actions.

# Creation Pathway

## **Characteristics:**

- You respond deeply to God through your experience of nature.
- Being outdoors replenishes you – moves your heart, opens your soul, and strengthens your faith.
- You enjoy God’s creation, and walking and talking with Him, and hearing Him from what He shows you in your surroundings.
- You’re highly aware of your physical senses, and often art, or symbols, or ritual will help you grow.
- You tend to be creative.

## **Build on Strengths:**

- Spend time outdoors.
- Find a location for getaways for prayer and/or retreat.
- Make beauty a part of your spiritual life (flowers, animals, people, art, candles, etc)

## **Some Cautions:**

- You may be tempted to use beauty or nature to escape.
- You will find that people are sometimes disappointing.
- Guard against the temptation to avoid church, thinking that you can better worship God in nature on your own.
- Learn to see beauty in other people and allow God to speak to you through them.
- Not to be disconnected or compromised with being Christ cantered from what we see.

## **Ways to Stretch:**

- Stay involved in a worshipping community.
- Be willing to help in less-than-beautiful settings.
- Take Scripture with you into nature and meditate on God’s Word as you enjoy creation.
- Journal by writing, photo taking and/or drawing your encounter with God in the pathway.