

# SOUL CARE

Noticing the **symptoms** when our souls are in need of care:

- Emotional fatigue, sighing - have others noticed you sighing a lot?
- Internal dialogue: "I'm letting people down," or "I don't deserve good things," or "It's all up to me."
- Continual work/productivity, contempt or dismissal of those who don't work as hard, fear that if you stop life will fall apart
- Surprise at being asked about one's real inner state and inability to talk about any hard things being faced
- Dodging and avoiding difficult situations: unable to forgive others, unable to address one's own hurts
- Escaping from life through social media, TV, porn, food and/or alcohol/drugs, fear of being alone with our thoughts
- Road rage
- Constant self-criticism, no grace with oneself for mistakes, perfectionism
- Small things bring big hurt - overreaction to minor offenses, everything feels like an attack
- Highly critical of the failings of others
- Inability to have empathy for the needs of others, checking out when someone talks about their problems, believing no one's issues could be as painful as your own
- Purposefully retreating from relationships, intentional isolation

Where to turn when your soul needs care:

- Speak to a trusted Christian friend - isolation is one way our spiritual life can be choked out, ask for help!
- Prayer and conversation with one of the pastors, who can refer you to specific people, practices and resources that will be helpful.

Examples of **resources** for soul care:

- Spiritual Coaching
- Spiritual Direction
- Journalling
- Meditation on scripture (slow reading, writing, Lectio Divina)
- Walking in nature
- Visio Divina (reflecting on art, photography or other images as a way to examine what's in our hearts)
- Listening to, participating in musical worship (with or without words)
- Prayer, scripted (e.g. collected prayers that others have found helpful in specific situations)
- Creative prayer with candles, body movement (other sensory activities)
- Activities that bring you joy (not outcome based)
- Spiritual retreat, silence and solitude
- Serving others (care or advocacy)
- Directed reading of Christian authors who've experienced similar circumstances