

Spiritual Formation Defined and Explained

We believe Spiritual Formation is a lifelong, transforming process in Christ Jesus that is cultivated through pursuing personal spiritual growth (UP), participating in healthy community (IN), and engaging in strong mission (OUT).

For the overarching purpose of glorifying God forever, Christ Community has a burden to clearly define and then faithfully practice spiritual formation, Up-In-Out. This conviction arises because we believe that growth in Christ-likeness is the surest way to fulfill our mission: to be disciples, who make disciples and plant churches.

We believe that followers of Jesus become his lifelong apprentices in all areas. In Christ and through the Holy Spirit, God transforms us so that our souls, minds, hearts, and bodies will love and reflect him completely. This process has no end; it begins now and carries into eternity.

In order to nurture and cultivate maturity, we envision true spiritual formation growing out of three interdependent habits. *First, we pursue personal spiritual growth (UP).* This aspect of spiritual formation assumes relationship with God through both Word and Spirit, combined with the dynamic interplay of intentionally giving and receiving from others. The graphic below uses imperfect words to describe our process that identifies personal maturation.

Secondly, we participate in healthy community (IN). Our personal spiritual growth cannot take place apart from active involvement in a community of faith. These communities worship, connect, learn, and love. In Christ Community Church, small groups are the backbone of how we experience community and receive pastoral care. The Sunday morning celebration, along with medium-sized groups of teaching and fellowship, complement the relationships developed in small group.

Thirdly, we engage in strong mission (OUT). This component of spiritual formation ensures the first two habits regularly move towards obeying God's glorious commission. Recognizing each person needs to obey the Lord's specific vocational call, we have committed as an institution to church planting as the key lens for local and global mission. This will serve to advance the vital deeds of mercy, justice, and evangelism.