



Dear Fellow Eagles,

Welcome to those joining this email community for the first time, you will find the previous email as a PDF on the Eagles' Wings web page, link below. As promised, here is another 'Eagles' Wings' email, in the hope that it will help you fly high!

If you have visited Rhythms of Grace this week, you may have read the question I posed on the Home page, and my response:

CAN YOU REMAIN SPIRITUALLY HEALTHY AND NOT GO TO CHURCH?

The charge frequently levied at 'church refugees' by regular church members, often with force, is that they can't be *proper* Christians, that they will *inevitably* backslide and fall off the edge—or even be consigned to hell! Perhaps you have had that experience?

This is undoubtedly true for some; but in view of the words and actions of many fully-paid-up church members—witnessed privately, and increasingly on the world-stage—apathy, ungodly behaviour, poor theology, heresy and apostasy are not just the province of the so-called 'dechurched'. Apparently, belonging to a recognised church—even one which is well-known and powerful—is no insurance against the poor outworking of faith and Christ-likeness."

There is no foundation for believing that anyone leaving a church will end up a spiritual car-wreck... unless they neglect themselves. And while fellowship is very important—we'll come to that in a bit—it remains the case that there are many examples in the Bible where people had the most profound encounters with the Lord, in solitude, away from the crowds and organised religion.

So how do we keep ourselves spiritually healthy?

1. Keep Christ-centred

First and foremost, like the apostle Paul, we need to keep Christ at the centre of everything [1 Corinthians 2:2]. The incarnation, cross, resurrection and ascension are the non-negotiable truths on which our whole lives are founded; everything flows from our understanding of God's amazing love manifested in the person of Jesus. (If you are unsure about any of this, please visit the [Foundation Section](#) of the website.) Staying Christ-centred stops us wandering off into either apathy, or a hazy spirituality which has no strength at its core.

2. Spend time with the Lord

To develop any relationship, we need to spend time with the other person. God is not far off, He has come to dwell in us; our bodies are His temple, or dwelling place [1 Corinthians 6:19-20]. In addition, His presence is all around us—‘in Him we live and move and have our being’ [Acts 17:28]. And we have right of access 24/7 by virtue of Jesus’ shed blood [Hebrews 10:19-21]. We don’t need a special atmosphere, anointed preaching or a sacred space to come into God’s presence. We just need to be hungry...

3. Read His Word

So often, Christians depend on others to give them their food—like baby birds receiving partly-digested food from their parents. However, nothing should take the place of knowing the Word—and its author—for ourselves. It is the plumb-line to measure everything else we read and hear, to prevent us going off track—which is the reason I include Bible references for the various points I am making. (It is our individual responsibility to check out what we hear against God’s Word, because every ‘teacher’ is fallible; and we need to actively put our trust in God who keeps us from stumbling [Jude 1:21].)

Paul describes Scripture as ‘God-breathed’ [2 Timothy 3:16], as we read and study, we take in His very breath and life! In addition, we have been given the Holy Spirit to come alongside us as our personal instructor [John 14:26]. ([Spirit-Led Encounters: The Rhythm of Devotion Parts 1 & 2](#) gives some help with developing devotional lives.)

4. Develop life-giving relationships

Ask God for life-giving relationships; people who will *see* you, *hear* you and *support* you in your faith journey—as you love, support and encourage them. We don’t need large numbers of people, but we do need two or three with whom we can share deeply. (Even Jesus had Peter, James and John with whom He shared more intimately.) If we ask God to supply, He will [Mark 11:24], and we will often be surprised at who He adds into our lives. While local relationships may seem preferable, in these days of internet connection, meaningful connections can be developed with people on the other side of the world.

5. Establish some rhythms

We are rhythmic people living in a rhythmic world, so it helps to establish some spiritual rhythms which fit our unique personalities and lifestyles. Friends of ours, new Christians, have developed the

habit of reading the Bible together every morning, using an app. Having read through the Bible once in a year, they are now on their second lap—and are growing in leaps and bounds. Another has a weekly Sabbath-walk to spend quality time with the Lord, and has also enjoyed establishing ways of celebrating home-based festivals. Others break bread daily, as well as having a regular meal and discussion with friends, (or recently, in lockdown, a zoom-call). The [Kingdom Rhythms](#) section has more ideas... However, there isn't a one-size-fits-all 'to do' list, just suggestions to stimulate our personal response to the Holy Spirit's promptings.

6. Make The Most Of Resources

Today we are blessed in having access to an abundance of resources including podcasts, videos, websites and books, all reflecting a rich variety of Christian teaching, devotional material and worship.

It is good to drink from different 'wells' as no one ministry or stream has all the truth, and the *best of everything* is God's gift to us. We don't have to agree with everything a ministry says or does to be encouraged by part of it, but we do have to make good judgements. There is a PDF file, 'Discernment' on the [Hope for the Hurting](#) page, which gives some pointers.

7. Explore Different Ways to Worship

Often it is corporate worship which people miss when leaving regular church life. We read that the Father seeks people who 'worship Him in the Spirit and in truth' [John 4:23, 24], and those who adore Him by 'presenting themselves to Him as living sacrifices' [Romans 12:1]. We tend to interpret 'worship' as musical, however, there are many ways of worshipping—only a few of which are explored in traditional settings.

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you creative ways to give your love and adoration to the Lord that are appropriate to you, your circumstances and your talents. And as you develop life-giving relationships, (see above), ask Him to show you how you can worship Him together.

In addition, there are enough periodic non-denominational Christian events and meetings to feed any appetite for large-scale Christian gatherings. We can avail ourselves of these without feeling any pressure to join a particular group.

I hope some of these thoughts have stirred you with some creative ideas; if you would like to share them with me, I would be delighted to hear from you, either by replying to jouneyintorest@gmail.com or using the message box on the private Eagles' Wings page: <http://www.rhythmsofgraceuk.org/eagles-wings-9691> .

The next email will be on 15th March; until then, be blessed in your journey

Kate W @ Rhythms of Grace

PS If you know of anyone who might be encouraged by **Eagles' Wings** do feel free to invite them to send me their details via the sign-up box.