

Seven spiritual pathways to God

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The meaning of pathways

- Definition: A spiritual pathway is the way we most naturally connect with God and grow spiritually.
- These are different from spiritual disciplines: solitude, silence, fellowship, prayer, scripture reading and study, giving, holy communion, fasting, etc.
- If you want to pursue this further see Gary Thomas, *Sacred Pathways*. An online assessment is here: https://rmcap.org/files/Spiritual_Pathway_Assessment.pdf

Seven pathways

1. Worship

- Folks with this pathway have a deep love of corporate praise and a natural inclination toward expressive worship.
- If you have this pathway, you know that God often ministers to you with a sense of his presence in tough times, encouragement, correction, guidance.
- Is this one of your pathways? (0-no way Jose!; 10-totally!) Score: _____

2. Relational

- Spiritual growth comes most naturally when you're involved in significant relationships: large group, small group, friends. You may struggle to pray, study scripture or serve alone.

- As you look back on journey, God has often spoken to you through others: a parent, pastor, friend, mentor, someone in your small group.
- Is this one of your pathways? (0-you nuts?; 10-Nailed it!) Score: _____

3. Service

- Those with this pathway tend to feel God's presence most when involved in serving others: teaching, visiting, physical labor.
- People with this gift often feel out of place when in public setting and don't have something to do. They don't need to be asked to serve: they just do it.
- Is this one of your pathways? (0-nope!; 10-Oh yeah!) Score: _____

4. Intellectual

- People with this pathway have found that they grow close to God as their minds are fully engaged with thought provoking ideas. They love learning new things and reflecting on the genius of God in nature and history.
- People with this pathway often feel uncomfortable with emotional approaches to the faith.
- Is this one of your pathways? (0-nein!; 10-You got me!) Score: _____

5. Activist

- Activists feel close to God when engaged in a single-minded devotion to a cause (protecting the unborn, citizenship, homeless, sex trafficking, etc.).
- Whatever the cause, the activists are like bulldogs who refuse to let go. They often embrace a high-paced, problem-filled, complex, strenuous way of life because of their passion to implement change. They love hanging out with other Activists.
- These people often do what the rest of us do: project their pathway onto others and expect others to be as cranked up about their causes as they

are; and when others aren't, they can't understand why everyone else is so complacent.

- Thank God for the Activists! Although they can be a pain in the rear they are used by God to keep the Church on mission (Ex: Nehemiah, Elijah).
- Is this one of your pathways? (0-not on your life!; 10-Bingo!) Score: _____

6. Contemplative

- Contemplative pathway people love uninterrupted time alone to read, pray, reflect, and quietly enjoy God's presence. If they get moving too fast they get disoriented and begin to feel they are living life superficially.
- Throughout the history of the church, God has used contemplatives to bring us back centrality of prayer, rest, spiritual discipline. Some of the more important contemplatives are not celebrated but quietly influential.
- Is this one of your pathways? (0-not!; 10-guilty as charged!) Score: _____

7. Nature

- Nature Pathway people respond deeply to God through their experience of nature. Given the choice of being indoors or out, it's a no-brainer. They may have a hard time in worship services but get them up in the mountains or at the sea shore, and they come alive.
- Is this one of your pathways? (0-not me!; 10-Yup, big time!) Score: _____

Take aways

1. Find a way to use your pathways to connect deeply with God everyday
2. Experiment with the other pathways to grow in character and balance. Don't use your pathways as an excuse not to engage in other activities. Our goal is to be available to God's Spirit to do whatever he calls us to do.