



**Spirituality and Religion.** It seems today that the focus of believers is more on **spirituality** than on **religion**—belonging to a particular church group. Spirituality and religion can be hard to tell apart but there are some pretty defined **differences** between the two.

**Religion** is a **specific** set of organized **beliefs and practices**, usually shared by a community or **group**.

**Spirituality** is more of an **individual practice** and has to do with having a sense of **peace and purpose**. It also relates to the process of developing **beliefs** around the **meaning of life** and **connection with others**.

**Spirituality** is based on the **belief** that there is something **greater** than ourselves, something **more** to being human than **sensory experience**, that we belong to the **universe**, we are **cosmic, divine** in nature. It involves a search for **meaning in life**.

- ❖ **Spirituality** encourages us to have **better** relationships with **ourselves, others**, and the **unknown**. It helps us deal with stress by giving us a sense of **peace, purpose**, and **forgiveness**.
- ❖ **Spirituality**, also, involves **self-reflection**, setting aside a **deliberate** time to slow down and **reflect** on **what** we are doing or **how** we are feeling.

Both **busyness** and **mind-numbing activities** (TV, video games, or cell phones) are ways to **avoid** self-reflection. **Self-reflection** runs against the grain of a **busy culture**. It requires that we set **specific time** aside to be **quiet, still, and alone**. Once we do that, we can **prayerfully** enter the **presence of God** and begin processing what has been going on in our life. We can ask questions like, “Am I satisfied with what I’m doing?” Or, we can ask **God**, “**Is my life organized in such a way to make my relationship with you a priority?**”

Asking God **this** question may prompt us to **remove** things that we feel are important in order to create **more space and time for God**.

Some practices for living more spiritually: **daily meditation, spiritual reading, practicing gratitude and spending time in nature**. Are these on your “**to do**” list?

**Lent, a good time for self-reflection.**