

Critical Junctures in the Spiritual Formation of Graduate Students and Young Faculty

Academic Event	Issue in Spiritual Formation	Helpful Spiritual Disciplines
Adjusting to graduate-level workload	Establishing and adjusting rhythms of work, rest, and sabbath	Sabbath Setting boundaries on work Periodic retreats
Isolation and loneliness	Finding and choosing community	Prayer partnerships Small groups Discipline groups Giving of time and resources
Recognizing cognitive dissonance between dominant ideas in your field and your understanding of the Christian faith	Understanding the relationship of doubt, faith, and unbelief Choosing among bifurcation, outright rejection of academic discipline or faith, and integration	Discipline groups Inductive Bible study Reading of theology and integrative Christian works Mentoring and spiritual direction
Awareness of hostility toward or indifference to God in the university	Acknowledging and believing in the presence and providence of God in one's work	Praying the divine office Prayer walking Journaling
Encountering arrogance, competition, and politics	By which rules will one "play the game"?	Intercessory prayer Acts of service Biblical reflection on "servant" passages
Preparing for major exams (general, qualifying, or comprehensive)	What is the source of my identity and hope? Anxiety versus trust	Supplicatory prayer Learning to be served by others
"Heavy lifting" phase of dissertation research and writing	Loving God with one's mind Structuring one's time and efforts Figuring out new patterns of productive work and renewing rest Dealing with fears of failure	Dissertation support groups Praying the divine office Meditative reading of Scripture (not intensive Bible study) Sabbath
Dissertation defense, interviews, post-docs, job offers	Discerning God's leading Assessing one's motives	Dissertation support groups Counsel of friends Mentoring
Publishing and grant-raising necessary for tenure and promotion	Living by faith rather than anxiety Renewed identity concerns	Faculty prayer and support groups Faculty mentors Prayer and meditation on biblical promises
Balancing teaching, research, and departmental service within the larger context of one's calling and place in life	Establishing and adjusting rhythms of work and rest	Sabbath Boundaries on work Non-negotiable commitments to worship and family life "Tithing" of time Faculty support groups and mentors
Figuring out how to be salt and light in one's immediate setting and academic discipline	Discerning how God is working through one's life, gifts, temperament, and personality	Faculty prayer and support groups Gift, temperament, and witness-style tools Journaling Writing a "mission statement"