

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

What is spirituality?

That word is pretty popular these days. Many people, including those who do not attend church or are affiliated with any religious organization, consider themselves "spiritual." Go into any bookstore (if you can even find a bookstore anymore), and there will be shelves of books under the genre "spiritual." And, even here in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, part of our diocesan mission statement is "connecting spirituality to everyday life."

But, what does that mean?

There is no single answer, of course. No one, right definition. Everyone who uses the word "spiritual" or "spirituality" probably has something different in mind.

For me, the best definition I ever heard is this: spirituality is how we are in relationship with God, to other people, to the world around us, and to ourselves.

In other words, spirituality is about life, being the kind of people who are sensitive to the sacredness of everyday moments and experiencing God's presence during the unfolding of a day. It is about our intention toward everything around us, fully engaging our five senses as we interact with the world, and allowing those interactions to affect us, mold us, as we grow as human beings.

Frederick Beuchner, a Presbyterian minister and well-known author on the spiritual life, put it this way in his book, *Listening to Your Life*:

If I were called upon to state in a few words the essence of everything I was trying to say both as a novelist and as a preacher, it would be something like this: Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is. In the boredom and pain of it no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace.

This Lent, our adult small group is trying to do just as Beuchner says. We are trying out some Christian practices that help us pay attention and take note. We are listening to our lives. And, so far, it has been pretty compelling.

See you in church,
Andrew