



# Spiritual Growth & Development

Please note the above title of this article. For a long time I have written, spoken and taught about our experience with God using the noun, spirituality. Recently, I became aware that since this experience with God is *active* not passive, best we correct the title to describe the active nature of our encounter with God. Although both words, growth and development, are nouns as well, they do suggest that spirituality should be a growth experience and not just a concept.

We have immediately available to us one of the very best tools for initiating and supporting spiritual growth and development. It is corporate worship. For the last two months I have pointed to various parts of our worship noting their spiritual natures. In this article I want to suggest a *how to* plan for maximizing our worship together as a truly spiritual growth experience. It is very simple, but huge in its results if you will try it.

It is like panning for gold. Our liturgy and total worship experience are the gravel and coarse rock from which we can separate out the gold nuggets. These nuggets are present in every worship service—often hidden among the many parts of the service. Our work is to sift through the parts, watching carefully for a nugget to show itself. That nugget is our special and personal gift for that day. It may be a word, phrase or thought in the liturgy, prayer, sermon or hymn. Whenever it appears we need to grab it and hold on to it.

Let the rest of the service go by so you can center on that specific gift given to you. Hold it close—repeat it to yourself many times—write it down so you don't forget it—take it home with you—hold it in your prayers. Repeat it and then listen! Listen ever so closely so that its message expands in your heart and mind. Make it a permanent part of your spiritual treasure.

Please note: There is a spiritual nugget for you in every worship experience. Be alert to its appearance. Sift through every part of the worship and let go of distracting thoughts about school, ball games, homework, laundry, business investments, a long sermon, who is wearing what today. Pay close attention to what is going on each moment and you will joyfully discover that nugget meant for you.

