

## **SOUL TRAINING**

### **Two-by-Four**

Based on James Bryan Smith's "The Good and Beautiful Community"

We need to keep a balance between spending time with God and caring for others. To lose one or the other is a common, but deadly, mistake. As a way of staying balanced, I would like you to do two things: spend two hours focused on God and do four intentional acts of peculiarity. He calls it "two-by-four": two hours with God and four acts of kindness. First, the two hours do not have to be done all at once. I would recommend thirty minutes on four separate occasions. (Some may spend eight times of fifteen minutes. Others may want to spend two one-hour sessions with God.) Second, corporate worship (going to church) can also count for one of your hours, but only if you go to church with a sense that you are meeting God, that your focus is on God. Too often we spend much of our time in church services thinking about things other than God.

[C]oncentrate, especially this week, on planning four unselfish acts of kindness, acts of peculiarity or acts of maladjustment. For example, if I choose not to buy something I do not need, I am showing I am maladjusted to the greed, materialism and excess of this world. If I resist the temptation to treat people according to their social class (usually indicated by dress) and treat all people as equal to me and to one another, I am showing that this world is not my home; I belong to the kingdom of God. If I decide to slow down and avoid rushing, I am demonstrating that I am maladjusted to the culture of hurry I live in.