Planned Disciplines: Colossians 3:12-17; 2 Peter 1:5-10

How do you respond to the concept of "discipline?"
Trying vs. training.

Extremes: avoidance of disciplines or imprisonment in disciplines. We seek a holistic balance.
What competes with or sabotages our move toward disciplines?

Holy habits: We are doing what we can e.g., engaging in spiritual disciplines) in order to receive from God the power to do what we cannot do (e.g., love our enemies…).

Our motive: "Disciplines are acts of loving obedience we offer to God steadily and consistently, to be used for whatever God purposes to do through our lives."

Self-denial (via negativa), and vigorous spiritual disciplines (via positiva) produce a training program for body, mind, spirit of God's athletes. Faith will result in living action. Spiritual disciplines are of no value whatsoever unless they make us more loving persons.

Purpose of disciplines:
Function of disciplines:
Being apprentices of Jesus. (The Great Commission)

Classical disciplines: the scaffolding, the primary colors, the basic food groups. Start and return here.
Prayer: relational' not functional; we divest ourselves of all false belongings and become free to belong to God and God alone."
"Prayer is the act by which the people of God become incorporated into the presence and action of God in the world. Prayer becomes a sacrificial offering of ourselves to God, to become agents of God's presence and action in the daily events and situations of our lives."
Philippians 4:4-7

Spiritual reading: this brings us into conflict with the information priorities of our culture. It is the discipline of openness to encounter God through the writings of the mothers and fathers of the church, beginning with the scriptures. The text becomes a means of grace through which we encounter the God who has spoken us forth into being and who continues to speak to us to shape us in the image of Christ for others.
Informational reading: We exercise control over the text and master it for our purposes.
Spiritual or formational reading we yield control to someone or something else outside of our agenda. We read attentively, seeking not o cover as much as possible as quickly as possible but to plumb the depths of the text so that the text may plumb the depth of our being and doing. The final goal is to be mastered by God for the fulfillment of God's purposes in us and through us.

Liturgy: The work of the people. This includes worship, celebration, fellowship, and our personal structures of daily devotion and all the patterns of activity by which we seek to enter into deeper relationship with God, corporate relationship with one another, and faithful response to God in our daily lives. We live in the new order of being in Chris, and liturgy is the diverse structure of behaviors that serve to nurture us in that new order of being. As we follow Christ, we are persons whose lives, individually and corporately, are lived by a set of values radically different from those of the broken world. Includes worship, study, daily office, fasting, retreat, service.

Personal disciplines: Those specific exercises and practices God asks of us or that we need to grow in grace.

Note that there are both chosen and unchosen disciplines.

Action steps: Practice prayer, spiritual reading, liturgy. Accept/consent to necessities God lays on you. Invest in your relationship to God as your greatest treasure.

Many insights from *Invitation to a Journey*, M. Robert Mulholland, Classical Spiritual Disciplines