



From the Introduction

by *Daniel Wolpert*

My first book, *Creating a Life with God: The Call of Ancient Prayer Practices*, had several goals. First, I wanted to present prayer practices and how to do them. Second, I wanted to situate these practices within the context of the church and lift them up as a vibrant part of our spiritual history borrowing from the Buddhists! Finally, I attempted to place these practices in a framework to demonstrate their relevance not as isolated activities but rather as components of a spiritual life, a life in Christ. As disciples and followers of Jesus, we are called to live out such a life in this world. All these tasks were undertaken from the point of view of the individual partaking of the life of prayer.

From my perspective as a pastor and a student of the life of prayer for twenty-five years, the goals of *Creating a Life with God* are the necessary first steps for someone or a group of people in community who want to pray in a deeper way. This book, *Leading a Life with God*, addresses the next requirement for deepening a community's spiritual life, namely spiritual leadership.

Two thousand years ago, a small group of people went out from an upper room to create a new faith (Acts 1:13-2:47). As far as we know, they had little education, no programs, no curricula, no denominational certification. But they did have one thing: the power of the Spirit. And it was through that Spirit that they were able to lead and do the work God was calling them to; God, through their faithful prayer lives, transformed them into spiritual leaders. God wants the fruits of prayer and the gospel to be spread to the entire world. This transmission occurs as people involved in the spiritual life are called to help others along this journey. I have met hundreds of individuals who, like the early disciples, feel called to guide others to a deeper relationship with Jesus. But I have also encountered the difficulty in making a transition from praying alone or as a participant in a group to leading a group or organization in prayer. That shift appears to be quite challenging. One can pray the practices outlined in *Creating a Life with God* for years yet still struggle mightily when it comes time to introduce these practices into churches or other groups.

Currently "spiritual leadership" is a very hot topic. In preparing this book I've read many of the best-selling resources on the subject. I consistently find that these books provide insights from secular leadership disciplines and then add a paragraph or two about how all these disciplines should be "led by the Spirit." I have yet to find a resource describing in depth how to be led by the Spirit. Such a description is the purpose of this volume.