THE SOUL CARE STARTER KIT

A GENTLE GUIDE TO CONNECT
WITH GOD, YOURSELF,
AND WHAT MATTERS MOST

By Larissa Marks

INTRODUCTION

Welcome. I'm glad you're here.

As a former college campus minister and pastor, and now, a spiritual director and mother, I know firsthand the weight of caring for others while trying to stay grounded myself. Ministry, leadership, and caretaking can be beautiful, meaningful work, but it can also quietly drain you if you're not tending to your inner life.

For years, I watched friends, colleagues, and even myself drift toward burnout because we didn't pause long enough to ask, "*How is my soul?*"

This Soul Care Starter Kit is a gentle invitation to slow down, breathe, and return to God's loving presence. Whether you're in ministry, leadership, caregiving, or simply navigating a full life, these simple practices will help you reconnect with yourself in ways that bring calm, clarity, and renewal.

May this guide be a small sanctuary of rest for your soul.

WHAT SOUL CARE IS (AND ISN'T)

What Soul Care *Is*

- Compassionate attentiveness to your inner life
- Space to notice what's happening within you emotionally, spiritually, and physically
- Rhythms that help you stay grounded in God's presence
- A way of living with more peace, alignment, and wholeness

What Soul Care *Isn't*

- A self-improvement project
- A to-do list to perform
- Something only "spiritual" people do
- A quick fix or escape from pain

A Helpful Image: Think of your soul as a garden. It thrives not through urgency, but through consistent, gentle tending.

A SIMPLE 3-STEP DAILY SOUL CHECK-IN

1. Pause

Stop for 30–60 seconds.

Let your body soften. Notice your breath.

Try: One deep breath in; long exhale out.

2. Notice

Ask:

- How is my soul today?
- What am I feeling?
- Where do I sense God? Where do I feel distance?

Let the truth surface gently.

3. Respond

Choose one small next step:

- Sit in silence
- Stretch or breathe
- Name one need
- Ask for support
- Pray a simple sentence

WEEKLY RHYTHMS & REFLECTIONS

Try one or two each week. Notice how it feels for you, and adjust as needed.

Simple Weekly Soul Rhythms

- A 10-minute reflection walk
- A midweek mini-Sabbath (a slow hour)
- A Friday gratitude practice
- A “soul check-in” with a trusted friend
- Embodied prayer (stretching, resting, moving)

Weekly Reflection Questions

- Where did I notice God this week?
- What drained me? What nourished me?
- What do I need heading into next week?
- What boundary or “no” might give me breathing room?

MICRO-PRACTICES FOR BUSY SEASONS

Even on hectic days, a few minutes can
re-center your soul. Try one of these.

Inbox breath:
Take three deep breaths before opening your inbox

Breath prayer:
“God, You are here. I am here.”

Hand-to-heart grounding:
Place your hand over your heart and say: “I am allowed to slow down.”

Earthing:
Walk barefoot on the ground

5 minutes of silence:
In the morning, midday, or before bed

A mindful walk:
Go at a easy pace, allowing your senses to notice

Notice God in an ordinary moment:
Turn your awareness toward God as you sip your coffee, look out the window, or water your plants

Release a burden:
Notice one thing you’re carrying, and release it

Name what’s true:
One thing I’m grateful for
One thing that was hard
One thing I’m releasing

CREATE YOUR OWN SOUL CARE PLAN

My Current Reality

What emotions, needs, or invitations am I noticing right now?

What I Need More Of

Circle or underline the word(s) that resonate with you. Or write your own below.

Rest • Silence • Joy • Community • Prayer • Movement • Boundaries • Play

My Simple Soul Care Plan for the Next 7 Days

One small daily practice:

One weekly rhythm:

One micro-practice:

CLOSING + INVITATION TO GO DEEPER

Caring for your soul is an act of courage. As you try these practices, my hope is that you experience a renewed sense of peace, clarity, and God's nearness in your everyday life.

If you'd like a companion on your spiritual journey, I would be honored to walk with you.

Work with me:

- Spiritual Direction
- Soul Care Coaching
- Sabbatical Support
- Vocational Discernment
- Retreats & Cohorts

Learn more or schedule a session: **larissamarks.com**

Grace and peace on your journey,

Larissa Marks