

## Nine Spiritual Temperaments

Abraham built altars. David danced and wrote psalms. Mary sat adoringly at Jesus' feet. John the Baptist fasted, and Peter's mother-in-law served. All of these spiritual heroes worshiped God in different ways. There are at least nine distinct spiritual temperaments that influence how a person worships and relates to God. See if you can recognise yourself in one or more of the following:

- **Naturalists'** hearts open up to God when they get outdoors. God seems more real to them when they're hiking under a big expanse of sky or at least sitting under a tree.
- **Intellectuals** really like books — even the reference kind — and live in the world of concepts. They want to come out of their devotional time with new understanding. If their mind isn't engaged, their heart may feel cold.
- **Sensates** are more aesthetically inclined. These are the artistic types, and they prefer creative and original music or even good architecture to open their hearts to God's presence. Their worship is about seeing, hearing, feeling, touching and even tasting God's presence.
- **Traditionalists** find great meaning by worshiping God according to set patterns — their own or historical ones. They may organize their life around scheduled times of prayer and may even choose to carefully observe the Christian calendar, aligning themselves with centuries of faith. Traditionalists often make good use of Christian symbols.
- **Ascetics** meet God internally. They prefer to shut out the world and meet God in solitude and austerity. For ascetics, the best environment for personal worship is a quiet place with a rather orderly environment, and they usually don't like the distractions of group worship. They are often advocates of all-night prayer vigils and many of the classical disciplines, such as fasting and meditation.
- **Activists** meet God in the vortex of confrontation. They want to fight God's battles. God becomes most real to them when they are standing up for justice or working on the frontlines to build God's kingdom.
- **Caregivers** love God by loving others. Providing care or meeting needs in Jesus' name spiritually energizes caregivers and draws them closer to the Lord.
- **Enthusiasts** like the excitement and celebration of group worship and probably buy more praise CDs than books. They feed off the enthusiasm of other believers and typically revel in God's mystery and supernatural power. Their exuberance tends to lead them to embrace creative forms of worship.
- **Contemplatives** are marked by an emotional attachment and surrender to God. They are God's lovers, and they want to spend their time in God's presence — adoring Him, listening to Him and enjoying Him. They often find benefit in journal writing, where they can explore their heart's devotion.