

Rule/Rhythm of Life

If you want to identify me, Ask me not where I live Or what I like to eat, Or how I comb my hair but ask me what I am living for, in detail and ask me, What I think is keeping me from living fully for the thing I want to live for?

Thomas Merton

Matthew 13:44-45

⁴⁴*"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.*

⁴⁵*"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.*

So the question we need to ask before we go any farther is
HOW BAD DO YOU WANT IT?

"The reason we are not able to see God is the faintness of our desire."

- Meister Eckhart

A Rule of Life seeks to answer two question:

a. Who do I want to be?

b. How do I want to live?

Synthesized

*How do I want to live so I can be who I want to be?*¹

A Rule of Life is a simple pattern of attitudes, behaviors, and practices that are a regular routine and are intended to produce a certain quality of life and character.²

It's really important when crafting your rule or rhythm that you do a couple of things.

Be Holistic - Pay attention to all the areas of formation:

- Spiritual (Restore)
- Missional (Serve)
- Relational (Love)
- Mental (Restore)
- Physical (Restore)
- Emotional (Restore, Love, Serve)

It takes time

You should explore a variety of disciplines so that you can get a sense of their meaning for your life and how you might incorporate them realistically into your life. This takes time and experimentation so that you can arrange them in a way that fits your life.

Don't just practice them once but at least 6 weeks.

¹ Barton, Ruth Haley, *Sacred Rhythms*. InnerVarsity Press 2006 pg. 147

² Ibid pg 149

It's Personal

Your rule/rhythm is very personal. Taking into account your:

- Your Personality
- Spiritual Pathways
- Season of Life
- Sin
- Work and Home life
- Where God is trying to stretch you

This means it needs to be realistic based on your stage of life. We are not monks and nuns.

Embrace the challenges and opportunities.

Balanced with disciplines that come naturally and stretch us.

Flexible and it's a living document.

Don't become rigid and legalistic

Reflect and evaluate every 6 months.

It's all a gift from God, *God's Grace*.

Dallas Willard says this,

"Saints burn way more grace than sinners ever could."

Grace is God doing for us what we cannot do on our own.

Writing a Rule of Life

What are your minimum daily/weekly/monthly/yearly requirements for ongoing spiritual transformation?³

Questions to work through:

- What do you want from God? Where do you want to change? Where do you feel powerless to change? Ask for grace, for God to help you with what you cannot do through effort alone.
- What practices will I engage in on a daily basis? Weekly? Monthly? Yearly?
- Where will I practice these disciplines?
- What time of the day/week/month/year?
- What disciplines will I practice in community and how will I practice them?
- When and where do you feel most connected to God? What disciplines do you connect for with based on your personality type and spiritual pathway? Pay attention to the experiences, practices, and relationships that draw you towards God. Incorporate these in your rhythm.
- What practices are more difficult but you sense God inviting you to for growth?
- Are there any particular practices needed for a specific need, sin in your life, or negative pattern?
- What are you currently doing to realize your goals and longings? Which of these things help and hinder your spiritual transformation?

³ Ibid. pg 151

FINALLY

- Choose disciplines that arise from your desire for God's transforming work in your life. Make sure they suit the limits and realities of your life and pay attention to all the areas of your life:
 - Spiritual (Restore)
 - Silence and Solitude
 - Prayer
 - Meditation
 - Examen
 - Discernment
 - Worship
 - Missional (Serve)
 - Service
 - Compassion Ministry
 - Evangelism/Discipling
 - Justice
 - Stewardship
 - Truth Telling
 - Relational (Love)
 - Community
 - Discipleship
 - Hospitality
 - Mentor/Spiritual Friend/Spiritual Direction
 - Small Group
 - Confession
 - Mental (Restore)
 - Study
 - Memorization
 - Physical (Restore)
 - Rest
 - Diet
 - Exercise
 - Emotional (Restore)
 - Counseling
 - Humility
 - Reflection
 - Examen

Suggested Reading

Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today by Joan Chittister
Sacred Rhythms by Ruth Haley Barton



Sojourner's Covenant

Having received Jesus as my Lord and Savior and having been baptized, I have decided to unite with Sojourners Community Church, in the transformational journey of being formed into the likeness of Christ and living the abundant life Jesus lived and taught. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other Sojourners to strive to do the following:

I will actively cultivate a relationship with God, so that He can continually RESTORE me...

...by participating in worship and practices that celebrate our unique identity as God's people, including but not limited to Sunday mornings

...by learning and practicing spiritual disciplines

- Entering an intentional relationship that assists in fostering spiritual growth. (e.g. Friend, Sojourner Guide, Mentor, or Spiritual Director)
- Taking advantage of Sunday morning teaching and other workshops designed to equip and encourage Sojourners in deepening their relationship with God

...by committing to practice personal spiritual disciplines

- Practicing prayer on a daily basis
- Regular times of Biblical study and meditation
- Times of solitude and reflection

*Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. **John 15:9-10***

I will practice showing God's LOVE to others in community...

...by living a life of hospitality.

- Opening my life to others in Group Life
- Sharing meals with others (e.g. Sunday lunches, Picnics, BBQ, Life Groups)

...by encouraging and serving one another

- Living a life of a steward by sharing my finances, gifts, and talents with the church family

...by living in unity and fellowship

- Speaking with encouragement and refusing to gossip
- Seeking reconciliation with those that I may have hurt or who have hurt me

*This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this that one lay down his life for his friends. **John 15:12-13***

I will strive to use what God has given me to SERVE the world around me...

...by becoming a co-laborer with Christ in His mission to reconcile and transform the world

- Intentionally sharing my faith and hope with others
- Praying for my neighbors, community, and world
- Listening and becoming aware of other people's stories and participating with Christ through short term mission trips, local ministries, my neighborhood, my workplace, and my friends
- Inviting and teaching others to live a life of a disciple of Jesus

*No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. **John 15:15-16***