

COMMUNITY RULE OF LIFE

fall
ordinary
time



Table of Contents

Introduction	01
What is a Rule of Life?	
Invitation to Seasonal Rhythms	02
Ordering Our Time by the Story of the Messiah	
Current Liturgical Season	
Invitation to Monthly & Weekly Rhythms	04
Featured Monthly Practice: Community	
Weekly Rhythms: Fasting & Sabbath	
Invitation to Daily Rhythms	06
Silence	
Scripture	
Self-Examination	
Prayer	
Reading Calendar	08
“Short Text” Plan: The Lectionary Cycle (Year A)	09
“Long Text” Plan Through the Bible	11

What is a Rule of Life?

A rule of life is a set of Spirit-empowered practices that help disciples abide in Jesus more deeply (John 15). For a given time, we commit to these core practices, perhaps lived out individually, but experienced within a body of Christ that is pursuing them together. Our goal is to find a deeper sense of unity, joy, and flourishing in Jesus.

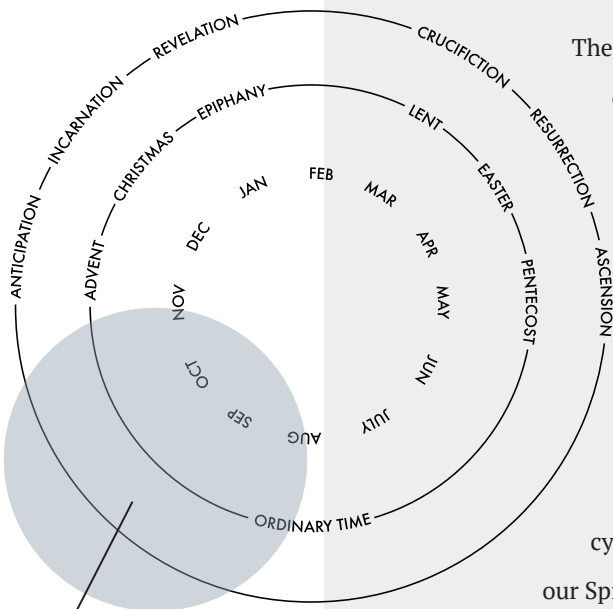
A rule of life helps us to live into healthy spiritual rhythms. We mark time with practices and “signposts” that remind us who God is and who we are in him. This guide introduces some ancient seasonal, monthly, weekly, and daily rhythms observed by our spiritual mothers and fathers that can deeply enrich our life in Christ.

The suggested disciplines and readings are not tasks to slave over or items to check off a list. Rather, they are offered like a trellis for cultivating a vine, a structure that invites you to start where you are, and do what you can, to enjoy the fruit and beauty that come. Hear them as an invitation, not a command. We encourage you to invite a group of trusted friends to journey with you, not just for accountability, but for deepening joy in Jesus together.

Invitation to Seasonal Rhythms

Ordering Our Time by the Story of the Messiah

The “liturgical calendar” is a way to learn and live out the story of Jesus through the year. Instead of structuring our lives according to the rhythms of school semesters, fiscal years, or even the normal calendar, we order our time by the story of the Messiah.



The liturgical year is made up of two cycles of time: the “Cycle of Light,” focusing on the light of Christ breaking into our darkness (the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany); and the “Cycle of Life,” focusing on the death and resurrection of Jesus bringing life to the world (the seasons of Lent, Easter, and Pentecost). We could also add a third cycle, the “Cycle of Love,” focusing on our Spirit-empowered living out of God’s redeeming love for the world. Usually, this cycle is simply called “Ordinary Time.”

Current Liturgical Season
FALL | ORDINARY TIME

The Cycles of Light and Life are what we call “Extraordinary Time.” They help us live in the real world with our identities rooted in the story of Jesus. Each cycle walks us through seasons of expectation, fulfillment, and proclamation that shape how we live:

EXPECTATION	> FULFILLMENT	> PROCLAMATION
<p>Advent ANTICIPATION</p> <p>Waiting in the dark for the Messiah’s coming</p>	<p>Christmas INCARNATION</p> <p>Rejoicing in the Messiah’s arrival, the light of the world</p>	<p>Epiphany REVELATION</p> <p>Revealing the light of the Messiah to the world</p>
<p>Lent CRUCIFIXION</p> <p>Walking with the Messiah through suffering & death</p>	<p>Easter RESURRECTION</p> <p>Rising with the Messiah in resurrection life & victory</p>	<p>Pentecost ASCENSION</p> <p>Revealing the Messiah’s reign through a Spirit-empowered life</p>

Current Liturgical Season

The liturgical season covered by this edition of the Community Rule of Life is the latter part of Ordinary Time. Each liturgical season invites us to different priorities and practices. After Pentecost, we are invited into the rhythms of Ordinary Time, when the Holy Spirit guides the ebb and flow of our work and rest, our love of neighbor and self, and our service to the church and the world.

(You can learn more about the liturgical calendar through books like Living the Christian Year by Bobby Gross.)

Invitations to Monthly & Weekly Rhythms

Monthly Rhythms



COMMUNITY

In the season of Ordinary Time, our spiritual practices are focused on *love*: love for (and from) God, others, and ourselves. This all-encompassing love is worked out through complimentary themes:

- **WORLD & CHURCH**
(participating in God's mission, and belonging to his people)
- **NEIGHBOR & SELF**
- **WORK & REST**

A foundational discipline that draws these themes together is the practice of community. It is in community that we learn love. We learn to pray and to share; to serve and to suffer; to embrace and to reconcile; to give and to receive. There is no discipleship to Jesus apart from community.

This season, we invite you to start or to deepen a monthly practice of community. Soma has a variety of opportunities built into our life and ministry, like MCs, discipleship groups, classes, and more. What is one realistic step you could take into the purposeful practice of community?

- Fill out the MC Connection Form at somamidtown.com/missional-communities
- Attend the D-Group Exploration (Sun, Oct. 29)
- Participate in the Emotionally Healthy Spirituality course (starting Oct. 8)
- Ask staff about other Soma attenders who live near you
- Invite a friend to coffee (or accept that invitation!)

Weekly Rhythms



FASTING

Abstain from lunch one day a week, if you are able. Don't just work through lunch or fill the time. Take the opportunity to pray (alone or with others), or to spend time in solitude and silence. If fasting from food isn't possible, what other good thing could you refrain from for a short time, in order to become more aware of your desire for God?



SABBATH

Sabbath is a time to stop, rest, delight, and worship the Lord. We invite everyone to take a block of time, ideally 24 hours, to set aside work, technology, and other distractions to focus on relationship with God and others. You could observe the usual Sunday Sabbath of Christians, the traditional Jewish Sabbath from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday, or a timeframe that works for your season of life and your household.

To learn more about the why, what, and how of these historic Christian practices, check out our practice guides and other resources at somamidtown.com/spiritual-formation.



Invitations to Daily Rhythms

We invite you to four key disciplines that form the backbone of a daily spiritual rhythm. These are often practiced in solitude, but strengthened by a supporting community.

SILENCE

Get in a comfortable but alert posture. Practice two minutes of silence & stillness to become aware of the Lord's presence and love for you. Inhale and exhale deeply, noticing what's going on in your body. Set your restful attention on God by repeating a short centering prayer like "Come, Holy Spirit," or "Here I am, Lord," or simply "Jesus."

SELF- EXAMINATION

Ask God to search you (Ps. 139) as you mentally review the day you're beginning (or ending, if you do this at night). Where were you most aware of God's presence? When did you experience the most joy or fullness of life? Where did it feel like God was absent? When were you the most drained? Bring those things to God in prayer.

SCRIPTURE

Ask God to speak to you in his Word by the Holy Spirit. Read your selected text without rushing, taking note of what jumps out at you or stirs within you. (Reading guides are offered on the following pages.)

PRAYER

Speak or write a short prayer, responding to what God has been revealing. You could use the "ACTS" model: adoration of God; confession of sin; thanksgiving; and supplication (requests for needs). Close with the Lord's Prayer (Mt. 6:9-13).

Reading Calendar

To engage in a daily rhythm of reading Scripture, set aside even 10-15 minutes of prayerful, reflective Scripture reading. (Choose a time you'll realistically keep!) Two different reading plans are offered below. While both are beneficial, choosing one might be best.

THE LECTIONARY CYCLE (YEAR A)

“Short Text” Plan

Shorter passages of Scripture are ideal for contemplative reading. We can slow down and be present to God in his Word, not just learn about him. This short text plan follows the Revised Common Lectionary, a three-year reading cycle used by Christians around the world, in sync with the liturgical year. Instead of reading new long passages each day, we stay with a few short passages for a week at a time, starting on Sunday. (Some liturgical days may use different passages than the Sunday readings.)

Reading Calendar

“Short Text” Plan

Lectio divina is an ancient approach to Bible reading that helps us read contemplatively. We read a short passage slowly several times, learning to recognize and respond to God’s voice to us in particular. This can be practiced individually or in a group. There are four “movements” to *lectio divina*:

01 : READ

After beginning with a few moments of silence, read the text slowly. Listen for a word or phrase that seems to stand out to you or to hold a special weight. Don’t try to interpret it. Simply notice what God is drawing your attention to.

02 : REFLECT

Read the passage a second time slowly, tuning in to what that word or phrase is doing inside you. What emotions do you feel? How are your desires or imagination stirred? Don’t rush to the next step. Allow yourself to notice what the Scriptures are prompting inside you.

03 : RESPOND

Read the passage a third time slowly, letting the word or phrase become a prayer that you lift up to God in response. Is there an in-vitation or challenge to accept? Is there grief to lament? Is it leading you to praise God? To confess sin? To intercede for someone or request something?

04 : REST

Read the passage a final time slowly, not to produce anything, but simply to rest in God’s presence with what he has said to you. This rest is the foundation of how you’ll carry God’s Word out into the world.

DATE	SUNDAY	PSALM	OT (or Acts)	EPISTLE	GOSPEL	PLAN WEEK
9/3	PROPER 17	26:1-8	JER. 15:15-21	ROM. 12:9-21	MT. 16:21-28	1
9/10	PROPER 18	119:33-40	EZEK. 33:7-11	ROM. 13:8-14	MT. 18:15-20	2
9/17	PROPER 19	103:8-13	GEN. 50:15-21	ROM. 14:1-12	MT. 18:21-35	3
9/24	PROPER 20	145:1-8	JONAH 3:10 - 4:11	PHIL. 1:21-30	MT. 20:1-16	4
10/1	PROPER 21	25:1-9	EZEK. 18:1-4, 25-32	PHIL. 2:1-13	MT. 21:23-32	5
10/8	PROPER 22	80:7-15	ISA. 5:1-7	PHIL. 3:4-14	MT. 21:33-46	6
10/15	PROPER 23	23	ISA. 25:1-9	PHIL. 4:1-9	MT. 22:1-14	7
10/22	PROPER 24	96:1-9	ISA. 45:1-7	1 TH. 1:1-10	MT. 22:15-22	8
10/29	PROPER 25	1	LEV. 19:1-2, 15-18	1 TH. 2:1-8	MT. 22:34-46	9
11/5	PROPER 26	43	MIC. 3:5-12	1 TH. 2:9-13	MT. 23:1-12	10
11/12	PROPER 27	70	AMOS 5:18-24	1 TH. 4:13-18	MT. 25:1-13	11
11/19	PROPER 28	90:1-12	ZEPH. 1:7, 12-18	1 TH. 5:1-11	MT. 25:14-30	12
11/26	CHRIST THE KING	95:1-7A	EZEK. 34:11-16, 20-24	EPH. 1:15-23	MT. 25:31-46	13

The standard lectionary contains many more readings for certain days, as well as each day of Easter week. For a complete listing, see the lectionary in the Book of Common Prayer at bcponline.org.

THROUGH THE BIBLE

“Long Text” Plan

Longer chunks of Scripture can be good for understanding books or sections of the Bible as a whole, possibly in more of a “study” mode. This long text plan will take you through the Psalms every 60 days, the OT every two years, and the NT every year. Even though the passages are long, don’t read them simply for information. The Lord wants to meet you in these pages. Listen for his specific invitations for you to know and follow him in faith.

Video overviews of each biblical book can be found at thebibleproject.com.

Reading Calendar

“Long Text” Plan

DATE	PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
SUN 9/3	136-138	AMOS 9	
MON 9/4	139, 141-142	OBADIAH	LUKE 14
TUES 9/5	140, 143	JONAH 1	LUKE 15
WED 9/6	144-145	JONAH 2	LUKE 16
THURS 9/7	146-147	JONAH 3	LUKE 17
FRI 9/8	148-150	JONAH 4	LUKE 18
SAT 9/9	2-4	MICAH 1	
SUN 9/10	1, 15, 34	MICAH 2	
MON 9/11	5-7	MICAH 3	LUKE 19
TUES 9/12	9-10	MICAH 4	LUKE 20
WED 9/13	8, 11, 15, 16	MICAH 5	LUKE 21
THURS 9/14	12-14, 17	MICAH 6	LUKE 22
FRI 9/15	18	MICAH 7	LUKE 23
SAT 9/16	20-22	NAHUM 1	
SUN 9/17	19, 23, 25	NAHUM 2	
MON 9/18	24, 26-27	NAHUM 3	LUKE 24
TUES 9/19	28-29, 31	HABAKKUK 1	JOHN 1
WED 9/20	30, 32-33	HABAKKUK 2	JOHN 2
THURS 9/21	34-35	HABAKKUK 3	JOHN 3
FRI 9/22	36-38	ZEPHANIAH 1	JOHN 4
SAT 9/23	37	ZEPHANIAH 2	

Week One

Week Two

Week Three

DATE	PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
SUN	9/24	39-41	ZEPHANIAH 3
MON	9/25	42-44	HAGGAI 1 JOHN 5
TUES	9/26	45-46	HAGGAI 2 JOHN 6
WED	9/27	47-49	ZECHARIAH 1 JOHN 7
THURS	9/28	50-51	ZECHARIAH 2 JOHN 8
FRI	9/29	52-55	ZECHARIAH 3 JOHN 9
SAT	9/30	56-58, 60	ZECHARIAH 4
SUN	10/1	59, 63-64	ZECHARIAH 5
MON	10/2	61-62, 65, 67	ZECHARIAH 6 JOHN 10
TUES	10/3	68	ZECHARIAH 7 JOHN 11
WED	10/4	69	ZECHARIAH 8 JOHN 12
THURS	10/5	66, 70, 72	ZECHARIAH 9 JOHN 13
FRI	10/6	71, 73	ZECHARIAH 10 JOHN 14
SAT	10/7	74-76	ZECHARIAH 11
SUN	10/8	77, 79, 82	ZECHARIAH 12
MON	10/9	78:1-39	ZECHARIAH 13 JOHN 15
TUES	10/10	78:40-72, 80	ZECHARIAH 14 JOHN 16
WED	10/11	81, 83	MALACHI 1 JOHN 17
THURS	10/12	84-85	MALACHI 2 JOHN 18
FRI	10/13	86-88	MALACHI 3 JOHN 19
SAT	10/14	89	MALACHI 4
SUN	10/15	90-91	GENESIS 1
MON	10/16	92-94	GENESIS 2 JOHN 20
TUES	10/17	95-98	GENESIS 3 JOHN 21
WED	10/18	99-102	GENESIS 4 ACTS 1
THURS	10/19	103-104	GENESIS 5 ACTS 2
FRI	10/20	105	GENESIS 6 ACTS 3
SAT	10/21	106	GENESIS 7

Week Four

Week Five

Week Six

Week Seven

DATE	PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
SUN	10/22	107	GENESIS 8
MON	10/23	108-110	GENESIS 9 ACTS 4
TUES	10/24	111-114	GENESIS 10 ACTS 5
WED	10/25	115-117	GENESIS 11 ACTS 6
THURS	10/26	119:1-48	GENESIS 12 ACTS 7
FRI	10/27	119:49-88	GENESIS 13 ACTS 8
SAT	10/28	119:89-128	GENESIS 14
SUN	10/29	119:129-176	GENESIS 15
MON	10/30	118, 120-121	GENESIS 16 ACTS 9
TUES	10/31	122-126	GENESIS 17 ACTS 10
WED	11/1	127-131	GENESIS 18 ACTS 11
THURS	11/2	132-135	GENESIS 19 ACTS 12
FRI	11/3	136-138	GENESIS 20 ACTS 13
SAT	11/4	139, 141-142	GENESIS 21
SUN	11/5	140, 143	GENESIS 22
MON	11/6	144-145	GENESIS 23 ACTS 14
TUES	11/7	146-147	GENESIS 24 ACTS 15
WED	11/8	148-150	GENESIS 25 ACTS 16
THURS	11/9	2-4	GENESIS 26 ACTS 17
FRI	11/10	1, 15, 34	GENESIS 27 ACTS 18
SAT	11/11	5-7	GENESIS 28
SUN	11/12	9-10	GENESIS 29
MON	11/13	8, 11, 15, 16	GENESIS 30 ACTS 19
TUES	11/14	12-14, 17	GENESIS 31 ACTS 20
WED	11/15	18	GENESIS 32 ACTS 21
THURS	11/16	20-22	GENESIS 33 ACTS 22
FRI	11/17	19, 23, 25	GENESIS 34 ACTS 23
SAT	11/18	24, 26-27	GENESIS 35

Week Eight

Week Nine

Week Ten

Week Eleven

DATE	PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
SUN 11/19	28-29, 31	GENESIS 36	
MON 11/20	30, 32-33	GENESIS 37	ACTS 24
TUES 11/21	34-35	GENESIS 38	ACTS 25
WED 11/22	36-38	GENESIS 39	ACTS 26
THURS 11/23	37	GENESIS 40	ACTS 27
FRI 11/24	39-41	GENESIS 41	ACTS 28
SAT 11/25	42-44	GENESIS 42	
SUN 11/26	45-46	GENESIS 43	
MON 11/27	47-49	GENESIS 44	ROMANS 1
TUES 11/28	50-51	GENESIS 45	ROMANS 2
WED 11/29	52-55	GENESIS 46	ROMANS 3
THURS 11/30	56-58, 60	GENESIS 47	ROMANS 4
FRI 12/1	59, 63-64	GENESIS 48	ROMANS 5
SAT 12/2	61-62, 65, 67	GENESIS 49	





FALL (ORDINARY TIME II)

**COMMUNITY RULE OF LIFE
SOMA MIDTOWN 2023**