



SPRING

LENT & EASTER

COMMUNITY
RULE OF LIFE

Soma Midtown 2021

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INTRODUCTION

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.

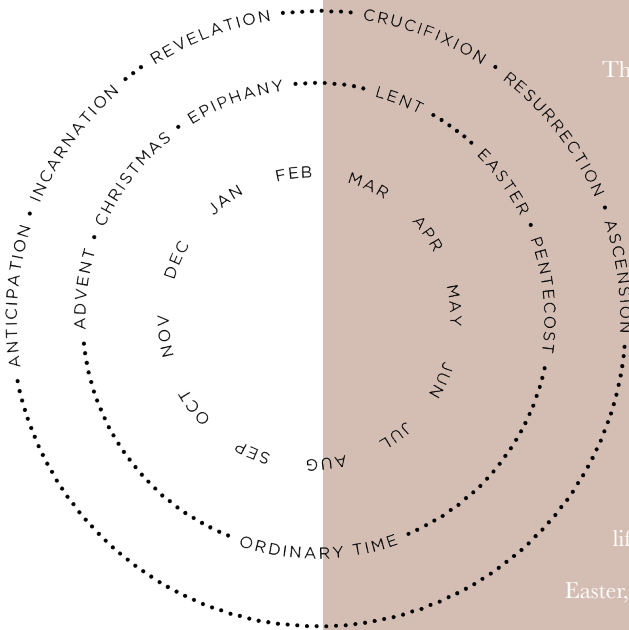
A rule of life helps us to live into healthy spiritual rhythms. We mark time with practices and “signposts” that remind us who God is and who we are in him. This guide introduces some ancient seasonal, monthly, weekly, and daily rhythms observed by our spiritual mothers and fathers that can deeply enrich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

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.”



INVITATIONS
TO WEEKLY
& MONTHLY
RHYTHMS

MONTHLY RHYTHMS

Simplicity

Simplicity is a way of life expressed in both inward and outward practices. It is the discipline of “enough,” living with a commitment to be unencumbered by attachments to things. We’re invited into a monthly rhythm of taking stock of where we have excess or clutter that can be simplified, physically, financially, emotionally, or spiritually. Inwardly, we practice disciplines like margin (creating space in our schedules and minds) and contentment (by “counting blessings” and giving thanks for what we have). Outwardly, we foster simplicity with practices like spending intentionally, consuming less, and giving generously.

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 rest, practice gratitude, and delight in God’s presence. We are inviting everyone to take a block of time, ideally 24 hours, to set aside work, technology, and focus on your relationship with God and others. Typically Sabbath is practiced from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday.

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

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 SCHEDULE

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 "long text" plan invites you to read bigger chunks of Scripture to cover more ground and to gain an expansive view of God's Word. The "short text" plan focuses on four shorter passages each week, thematically tied to the liturgical year, and is ideal for slower contemplative reading. A balanced diet of both kinds of reading is good for our spiritual health.

NOTES



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