

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 ever the normal calendar, we order our time by the story of the Messiah.

Story of the Mess

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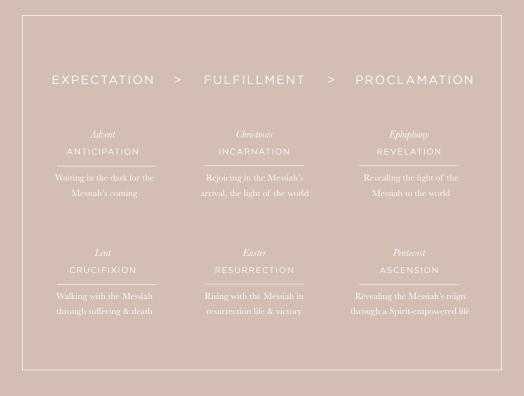
REVELATION

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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
to the world (the seasons of Lent,

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."

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



The liturgical seasons with which this Community Rule of Life overlaps are Lent, Easter, and Pentecost. Each season invites us to different priorities and practices. Lent invites us to an attitude of sober self-examination to recognize our sin, but also a deeper relationship with Jesus as we walk with him toward his cross. Easter invites us to live with joyful awe at God's victory over death and to incarnate his resurrection life. And Pentecost invites us to proclaim with our words and demonstrate with our actions the present reality of Jesus' reign in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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



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.

"LONG TEXT" PLAN: THROUGH THE BIBLE

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 the bible project.com.

DATE	PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
3/2/22	2-4	Joshua 14	2 Thessalonians 1
			2 Thessalonians 2
			2 Thessalonians 3
			1 Timothy 1
3/6/22	8, 11, 15, 16	Joshua 18	
			1 Timothy 2
			1 Timothy 3
			1 Timothy 4
3/10/22	19, 23, 25	Joshua 22	1 Timothy 5
			1 Timothy 6
3/14/22	34-35	Judges 2	2 Timothy 1
3/15/22	36-38	Judges 3	2 Timothy 2
3/16/22	37	Judges 4	2 Timothy 3

DATE	PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
3/17/22	39-41	Judges 5	2 Timothy 4
			Titus 1-2
3/20/22	47-49	Judges 8	
3/21/22	50-51	Judges 9	Titus 3
3/22/22	52-55	Judges 10	Philemon
3/23/22	56-58, 60	Judges 11	Hebrews 1
			Hebrews 2
			Hebrews 3
			Hebrews 4
			Hebrews 5
			Hebrews 6
3/31/22	77, 79, 82	Judges 19	Hebrews 7
			Hebrews 8
4/2/22	78:40-end, 80	Judges 21	
4/3/22	81, 83	Ruth 1	
			Hebrews 9
			Hebrews 10
			Hebrews 11
			Hebrews 12

DATE	PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
4/8/22	92-94	1 Samuel 2	Hebrews 13
4/11/22	103-104	1 Samuel 5	James l
4/12/22	105	1 Samuel 6	James 2
4/13/22	106	1 Samuel 7	James 3
4/14/22	107	1 Samuel 8	James 4
	119:49-88		
4/22/22	118, 120-121	1 Samuel 16	1 Peter 5
			2 Peter 1
			2 Peter 2
			2 Peter 3

DATE	PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
5/1/22	148-150	1 Samuel 25	
5/2/22	2-4	1 Samuel 26	1 John 3
5/3/22	1, 15, 34	1 Samuel 27	l John 4
5/4/22	5-7	1 Samuel 28	1 John 5
5/5/22	9-10	1 Samuel 29	2 John
5/6/22	8, 11, 15, 16	1 Samuel 30	3 John
5/10/22	19, 23, 25	2 Samuel 3	Revelation 1
5/12/22	28-29, 31	2 Samuel 5	Revelation 3
5/13/22	30, 32-33	2 Samuel 6	Revelation 4
5/14/22	34-35	2 Samuel 7	
		2 Samuel 8	

DATE	PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
5/25/22	61-62, 65, 67	2 Samuel 18	Revelation 12
5/26/22	68	2 Samuel 19	Revelation 13
5/27/22	69	2 Samuel 20	Revelation 14
5/31/22	77, 79, 82	2 Samuel 24	Revelation 16
6/1/22	78:1-39	1 Kings 1	Revelation 17
		1 Kings 2	
		1 Kings 3	
		1 Kings 4	

"SHORT TEXT" PLAN: THE LECTIONARY CYCLE

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 or weeks use different passages than the Sunday readings.)

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 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 invitation 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 : RFST

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.



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