

SOMA MIDTOWN 2023

LENT
EASTER

Spring



COMMUNITY
RULE OF LIFE



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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.

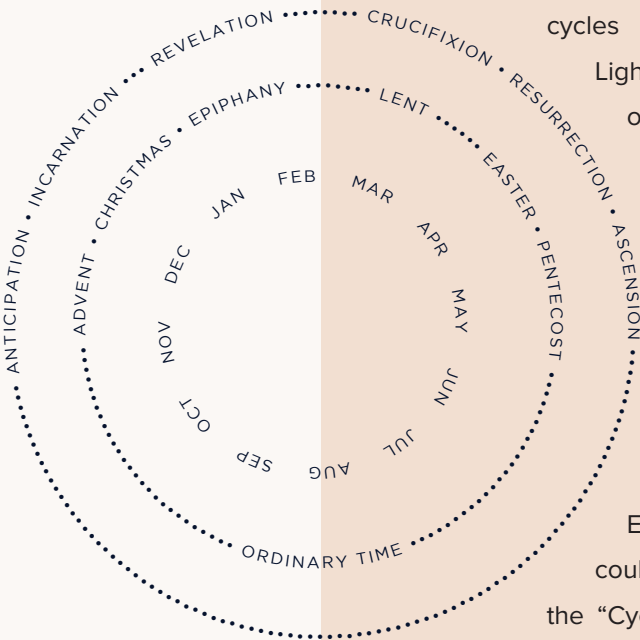
The suggested disciplines and readings are not tasks to slave over or items to check off a list. Rather, they are offered like a trellis for cultivating a vine, a structure that invites you to start where you are, and do what you can, to enjoy the fruit and beauty that come. Hear them as an invitation, 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.”



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

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FULLILLMENT

>

PROCLAMATION

Advent

ANTICIPATION

Waiting in the dark for the Messiah’s coming

Christmas

INCARNATION

Rejoicing in the Messiah’s arrival, the light of the world

Ephiphany

REVELATION

Revealing the light of the Messiah to the world

Lent

CRUCIFIXION

Walking with the Messiah through suffering & death

Easter

RESURRECTION

Rising with the Messiah in resurrection life & victory

Pentecost

ASCENSION

Revealing the Messiah’s reign through a Spirit-empowered life

LENT + EASTER

The liturgical seasons covered by this edition of the Community Rule of Life are Lent and Easter. 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 live out his resurrection life.

(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



Fasting is a regular weekly rhythm of our Community Rule of Life. During Lent, however, it takes on more significance. Historically, fasting has been a core practice associated with Lent. As we fast, we not only give something up, we also take something on. We make room to receive God’s love in a new way and give it out to others. Fasting is a temporary no to something good so we can cultivate a deeper, lasting yes to something even better – a small flame we light so that in time our light can “break forth like the dawn” (Isa. 58:8).

Traditionally we fast from food (a particular kind, or altogether) for a set period. However, that may not be possible for you medically or wise for you emotionally. (For anyone struggling with an eating disorder, fasting may be harmful.) Fasting from other things can be just as powerful: from entertainment and media; from technology or devices; from spending money. Whatever we fast from, we turn that time and our experience of wanting toward God. He graciously reveals our needs, our desires, our attachments – not all of which are bad, but which ultimately find their fulfillment in him.

As you consider what a fast on the order of a month might look like, you can use this framework to journal your experience of fasting:

<i>I will fast from...</i>	<i>I will replace it with...</i>	<i>God met me in these ways, or revealed this to me...</i>



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 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.

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.)

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."

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 in the remaining pages. While both are beneficial, choosing one might be best.

“SHORT TEXT” PLAN: THE LECTIONARY CYCLE (YEAR A)

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.)

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 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 : 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.

DAY	DATE	SUNDAY	PSALM	OT (or Acts)	EPISTLE	GOSPEL
Wed	2/22	Ash Wednesday	51:1-7	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17	2 Cor. 5:20b-6:10	Mt. 6:1-6, 16-21
Sun	2/26	Lent I	32	Gen. 2:15-17; 3:1-7	Rom. 5:12-19	Mt. 4:1-11
Sun	3/5	Lent II	121	Gen. 12:1-4a	Rom. 4:1-5, 13-17	Jn. 3:1-17
Sun	3/12	Lent III	95	Ex. 17:1-7	Rom. 5:1-11	Jn. 4:5-42
Sun	3/19	Lent IV	23	1 Sam. 16:1-13	Eph. 5:8-14	Jn. 9:1-41
Sun	3/26	Lent V	130	Ez. 37:1-14	Rom. 8:6-11	Jn. 11:1-45
Sun	4/2	Palm Sunday*	118:1-2, 19-29	Isa. 50:4-9a	Php. 2:5-11	Mt. 21:1-11
Mon	4/3	Holy Monday	36:5-11	Isa. 42:1-9	Heb. 9:11-15	Jn. 12:1-11
Tues	4/4	Holy Tuesday	71:1-14	Isa. 49:1-7	1 Cor. 1:18-31	Jn. 12:20-36
Wed	4/5	Holy Wednesday	70	Isa. 50:4-9a	Heb. 12:1-3	Jn. 13:21-32
Thurs	4/6	Maundy Thursday	116:1, 10-17	Ex. 12:1-14	1 Cor. 11:23-26	Jn. 13:1-17, 31b-35
Fri	4/7	Good Friday	22	Isa. 52:13-53:12	Heb. 10:16-25	Jn. 18:1-19:42
Sat	4/8	Holy Saturday	31:1-4, 15-16	Job 14:1-14	1 Pet. 4:1-8	Jn. 19:38-42
Sun	4/9	Easter Sunday*	118:1-2, 14-24	Jer. 31:1-6	Col. 3:1-4	Jn. 20:1-18
Sun	4/16	Easter II	16	Acts 2:14a, 22-32	1 Pet. 1:3-9	Jn. 20:19-31
Sun	4/23	Easter III	116:1-3, 10-17	Acts 2:14a, 36-41	1 Pet. 1:17-23	Lk. 24:13-35
Sun	4/30	Easter IV	23	Acts 2:42-47	1 Pet. 2:19-25	Jn. 10:1-10
Sun	5/7	Easter V	31:1-5, 15-16	Acts 7:55-60	1 Pet. 2:2-10	Jn. 14:1-14
Sun	5/14	Easter VI	66:7-18	Acts 17:22-31	1 Pet. 3:13-22	Jn. 14:15-21
Thurs	5/18	Ascension	47	Acts 1:1-11	Eph. 1:15-23	Lk. 24:44-53
Sun	5/21	Easter VII	68:1-10, 33-36	Acts 1:6-14	1 Pet. 4:12-14, 5:6-11	Jn. 17:1-11

**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.*

“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 thebibleproject.com.

	DATE	PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
Wed	2/22	122-126	Isaiah 23	1 Thessalonians 3
Thurs	2/23	127-131	Isaiah 24	1 Thessalonians 4
Fri	2/24	132-135	Isaiah 25	1 Thessalonians 5
Sat	2/25	136-138	Isaiah 26	
Sun	2/26	139, 141-142	Isaiah 27	
Mon	2/27	140, 143	Isaiah 28	2 Thessalonians 1
Tues	2/28	144-145	Isaiah 29	2 Thessalonians 2
Wed	3/1	146-147	Isaiah 30	2 Thessalonians 3
Thurs	3/2	148-150	Isaiah 31	1 Timothy 1
Fri	3/3	2-4	Isaiah 32	1 Timothy 2
Sat	3/4	1, 15, 34	Isaiah 33	
Sun	3/5	5-7	Isaiah 34	
Mon	3/6	9-10	Isaiah 35	1 Timothy 3
Tues	3/7	8, 11, 15, 16	Isaiah 36	1 Timothy 4

DATE		PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
Wed	3/8	12-14, 17	Isaiah 37	1 Timothy 5
Thurs	3/9	18	Isaiah 38	1 Timothy 6
Fri	3/10	20-22	Isaiah 39	2 Timothy 1
Sat	3/11	19, 23, 25	Isaiah 40	
Sun	3/12	24, 26-27	Isaiah 41	
Mon	3/13	28-29, 31	Isaiah 42	2 Timothy 2
Tues	3/14	30, 32-33	Isaiah 43	2 Timothy 3
Wed	3/15	34-35	Isaiah 44	2 Timothy 4
Thurs	3/16	36-38	Isaiah 45	Titus 1
Fri	3/17	37	Isaiah 46	Titus 2
Sat	3/18	39-41	Isaiah 47	
Sun	3/19	42-44	Isaiah 48	
Mon	3/20	45-46	Isaiah 49	Titus 3
Tues	3/21	47-49	Isaiah 50	Philemon
Wed	3/22	50-51	Isaiah 51	Hebrews 1
Thurs	3/23	52-55	Isaiah 52	Hebrews 2
Fri	3/24	56-58, 60	Isaiah 53	Hebrews 3
Sat	3/25	59, 63-64	Isaiah 54	
Sun	3/26	61-62, 65, 67	Isaiah 55	
Mon	3/27	68	Isaiah 56	Hebrews 4
Tues	3/28	69	Isaiah 57	Hebrews 5
Wed	3/29	66, 70, 72	Isaiah 58	Hebrews 6

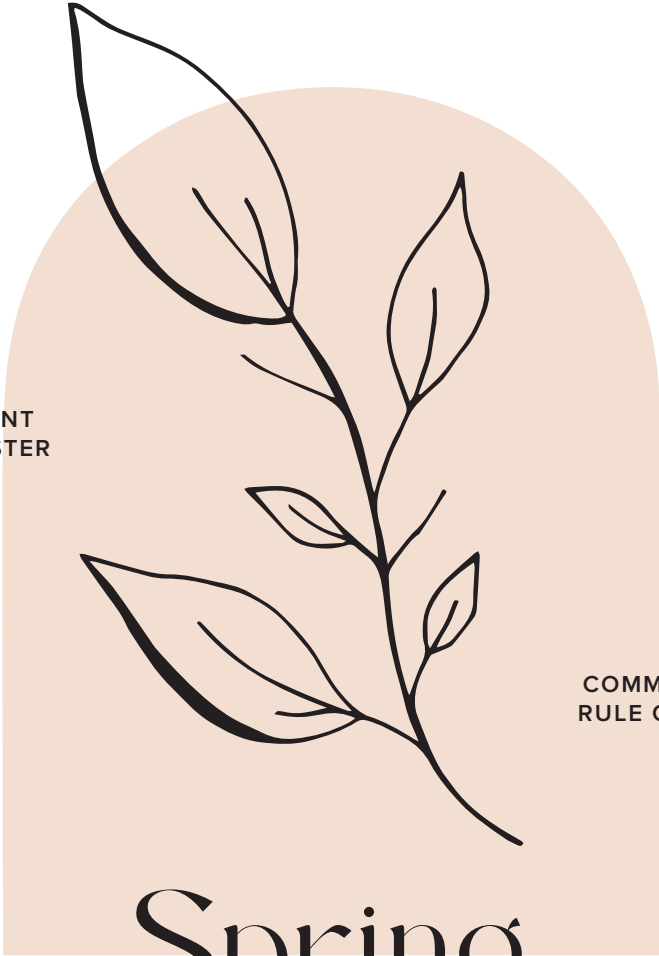
DATE		PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
Thurs	3/30	71, 73	Isaiah 59	Hebrews 7
Fri	3/31	74-76	Isaiah 60	Hebrews 8
Sat	4/1	77, 79, 82	Isaiah 61	
Sun	4/2	78:1-39	Isaiah 62	
Mon	4/3	78:40-72, 80	Isaiah 63	Hebrews 9
Tues	4/4	81, 83	Isaiah 64	Hebrews 10
Wed	4/5	84-85	Isaiah 65	Hebrews 11
Thurs	4/6	86-88	Isaiah 66	Hebrews 12
Fri	4/7	89	Jeremiah 1	Hebrews 13
Sat	4/8	90-91	Jeremiah 2	
Sun	4/9	92-94	Jeremiah 3	
Mon	4/10	95-98	Jeremiah 4	James 1
Tues	4/11	99-102	Jeremiah 5	James 2
Wed	4/12	103-104	Jeremiah 6	James 3
Thurs	4/13	105	Jeremiah 7	James 4
Fri	4/14	106	Jeremiah 8	James 5
Sat	4/15	107	Jeremiah 9	
Sun	4/16	108-110	Jeremiah 10	
Mon	4/17	111-114	Jeremiah 11	1 Peter 1
Tues	4/18	115-117	Jeremiah 12	1 Peter 2
Wed	4/19	119:1-48	Jeremiah 13	2 Peter 1
Thurs	4/20	119:49-88	Jeremiah 14	2 Peter 2

	DATE	PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
Fri	4/21	119:89-128	Jeremiah 15	3 Peter 1
Sat	4/22	119:129-176	Jeremiah 16	
Sun	4/23	118, 120-121	Jeremiah 17	
Mon	4/24	122-126	Jeremiah 18	2 Peter 1
Tues	4/25	127-131	Jeremiah 19	2 Peter 2
Wed	4/26	132-135	Jeremiah 20	2 Peter 3
Thurs	4/27	136-138	Jeremiah 21	1 John 1
Fri	4/28	139, 141-142	Jeremiah 22	1 John 2
Sat	4/29	140, 143	Jeremiah 23	
Sun	4/30	144-145	Jeremiah 24	
Mon	5/1	146-147	Jeremiah 25	1 John 3
Tues	5/2	148-150	Jeremiah 26	1 John 4
Wed	5/3	2-4	Jeremiah 27	1 John 5
Thurs	5/4	1, 15, 34	Jeremiah 28	2 John
Fri	5/5	5-7	Jeremiah 29	3 John
Sat	5/6	9-10	Jeremiah 30	
Sun	5/7	8, 11, 15, 16	Jeremiah 31	
Mon	5/8	12-14, 17	Jeremiah 32	Jude
Tues	5/9	18	Jeremiah 33	Revelation 1
Wed	5/10	20-22	Jeremiah 34	Revelation 2
Thurs	5/11	19, 23, 25	Jeremiah 35	Revelation 3
Fri	5/12	24, 26-27	Jeremiah 36	Revelation 4
Sat	5/13	28-29, 31	Jeremiah 37	

DATE		PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
Sun	5/14	30, 32-33	Jeremiah 38	
Mon	5/15	34-35	Jeremiah 39	Revelation 5
Tues	5/16	36-38	Jeremiah 40	Revelation 6
Wed	5/17	37	Jeremiah 41	Revelation 7
Thurs	5/18	39-41	Jeremiah 42	Revelation 8
Fri	5/19	42-44	Jeremiah 43	Revelation 9
Sat	5/20	45-46	Jeremiah 44	
Sun	5/21	47-49	Jeremiah 45	
Mon	5/22	50-51	Jeremiah 46	Revelation 10
Tues	5/23	52-55	Jeremiah 47	Revelation 11
Wed	5/24	56-58, 60	Jeremiah 48	Revelation 12
Thurs	5/25	59, 63-64	Jeremiah 49	Revelation 13
Fri	5/26	61-62, 65, 67	Jeremiah 50	Revelation 14
Sat	5/27	68	Jeremiah 51	

NOTES

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Spring