

Time to Live

Week beginning 10th Feb

Aim – To find out about a “rule of life” as a tool which can help us grow in discipleship.

Welcome

Have a few minutes silence and then read the course prayer.

Divide the cell into 2 groups and give each person a pencil and paper.
Give the members of one group a ruler as well. Give them 3 mins to draw squares 5cm by 5cm compare the results of the 2 groups

Read this aloud

The word “rule” conjures up images of school and dreary regulations. But a Christian “rule of life” is not that sort of thing. A “Rule of Life” is a framework for freedom – deliberately chosen habits and customs which we have chosen because they help us to live God’s way more closely. One of the most famous and far reaching Christian “rules of life” is that of the sixth century St Benedict of Nursia which remains the joyful heartbeat of the Benedictine Order to this day. This rule and many others were written in Latin: The Latin word “regula” means rule in the sense of a straight edge for measuring and drawing lines.... Like the ruler, in the welcome activity, It helps us to accomplish what we want without getting wobbly! The other meaning of the word “regula” is a regular rhythm – a chosen rhythm of life brings freedom rather than restriction, a practical way of seeking God more authentically and living more fully and joyfully for him. All growing Christian disciples have a rule of life although they may not know that this is what it is called.

Discuss

1. Have you ever heard of the idea of a “rule of life” before?
2. Can you think of any deliberately chosen priorities, habits and rhythms in your life which help you follow Christ more closely? (If you have difficulty answering this look at the “Duties of church membership” on the back page– you may find that some of the things in it are part of your rule too!)

Word

Jesus’ rule of life.

1. Make a list of some of the habits and practices which Jesus kept to keep him close to his heavenly Father.

The following bible verses may help you find some of the less obvious things he did:

Mark’s Gospel Chapter 1 verses 35-39-44, 41 Chapter 2 verses 5, 16, 18-21, Chapter 3 verses 1-6, Chapter 4.38, Chapter 5 verses 30-32, Chapter 9.50, Chapter 10 verses 16, 45, Chapter 14 verse 12, 26, 32, Chapter 15 verse 5
Matthew’s Gospel Chapter 4 verses 1, 4, 7, 10; Chapter 5 verses 3-11, 20, 33-37, 39-42, 44, Chapter 6 verse 31
Luke’s Gospel Chapter 2 verses 41, 46, 49, 51
John’s Gospel Chapter 13 verses 5, 14, 34.

And/or

2. How do you think Jesus would do one of the following
 - Wake up in the morning
 - Greet those he would see first thing in the morning
 - Eat
 - Drive
 - Work
 - Shop
 - Use the Internet
 - Watch TV
 - Go to bed at Night

My rule of life.

1. What will you do in the coming week to be more like Jesus in one of these areas?
2. How can you fellow cell members pray for you and keep you accountable as you grow in this area of your life?

Timet a...

Worship

Sing or listen to a song or hymn which speaks of the presence of God in the rhythm of our everyday lives – eg. Jesus, be the Centre, Be Thou my Vision etc

Witness

- Pray – especially for the people on your cell list.
- Continue to make arrangements to do anything which has come out of your Growth Plan, as appropriate.
- Look at the week of prayer for the benefice. See when you might be able to commit to pray in that week and let the relevant person know.
- Give anyone who wants to the opportunity to sign up to have a Lent appointment with Sally

The Church of England has a starting point for a rule of life in the "Short Guide to the Duties of Church Membership" commended by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. You may find it helpful as you think about your own "rule of life":

- *To follow the example of Christ in home and daily life and to bear witness to him*
- *To be regular in private prayer, day by day*
- *To read the Bible carefully*
- *To be part of church every week*
- *To receive Holy Communion faithfully and regularly*
- *To give personal service to Church, neighbours and community*
- *To uphold the standard of marriage entrusted by Christ to his church*
- *To care that children are brought up to love and serve the Lord*
- *To give money (proportional to personal income) for the work of the church*

Notes for Cell Meetings - Lent 08

Lent is an opportunity to pause, to create space and to clear some of the clutter in our lopsided and overcrowded lives. This Lent, we are focussing on seeing Time as God's gift and particularly on the way that we can create rhythms that draw us closer to Jesus in our everyday lives. I would also like the opportunity to meet individually with as many of you as possible during Lent to pray with you and to discuss how your relationship with God is going. A sort of **spiritual check up** if you like. The idea is to encourage you and to help me to keep in touch as the cell church grows and to lead better. You will be able to book a slot on a sheet that will go round on your cell night – alternatively give me a ring. Love Sally tel 470762, sally@tasvalley.org

Dates

Week beginning 3 rd Feb	Ash Wednesday Healing Service 6 th Feb 7.30pm Tasburgh Church
Week beginning 10 th Feb	Time to Live
Week beginning 17 th Feb	Time to Pause
Week beginning 24 th Feb	Time to Celebrate
Week beginning 2 nd March	Time to Rest
Week beginning 9 th March	Time to Play
Week beginning 16 th March	Join in the week of prayer in the benefice (See March newsheet for timetable)
Week beginning 23 rd March	Go to an Easter Day Service on 23 rd Easter Cell Social
Week beginning 30 th March	Time to Liberate

Course Prayer

GOD of Eternity, teach us to pause.

GOD of Creation, teach us to wonder.

GOD of Sabbath, teach us to rest.

GOD of Delight, teach us to play.

GOD of the Poor, teach us to share

in your work of liberation

GOD of Love, reconciling us through Jesus Christ,

Fill our lives with your perfect peace.

Word

Read – Exodus 20.8-11, Mark 2.23-3.5

Some Pharisees in Jesus' day had remembered Sabbath as a day – but not as an attitude (See above) For them Sabbath was one of the important things about their national identity – it was like the food laws and the temple. It was one of those things which said I am a Jew and not one of those horrible Roman overlords.

Now that's all very natural and human but if in all of that the heart of Sabbath is lost, there's a problem. As Jesus strolled through the cornfields with his disciples, these Pharisees it seems were looking to catch him out. As they watch them casually pluck a few ears of corn, they pounce – that's threshing, a forbidden melachah! Why are you doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath!!

And so first Jesus reminds them of a story – The story about David, God's anointed on the run from Saul eating bread that was normally forbidden. (Not so different from Jesus, God's anointed being spied on by those who will by the end of this story are plotting on the Sabbath to bring him to his death) God's laws, he said were given for the benefit of humankind – not so that we can do whatever we feel like, but so we can receive blessing through them. The blessing of playing with a few ears of corn as you take a Sabbath walk. The blessing of seeing a fellow human being freed and whole. These are Sabbath blessings.

Secondly Jesus said something important – “The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath”. In other words Jesus is in charge of the Sabbath – to have a Sabbath heart is to have a heart centred on him. Sabbath is not just a day. The Hebrew for Sabbath and rest is the same. When Jesus said “Come unto me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest”, he said also “Come unto me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you Sabbath.

Consider some or all of the following questions:

1. Exodus 20.8-11 commands people to cease from work one day in 7. Why do you think this is important? What are the difficulties in keeping this command in contemporary society?
2. What can we learn about Jesus' approach to the Sabbath from Mark 2.23-3.5?
3. What do you think Jesus meant when he said, “The Sabbath was made for humankind, not humankind for the Sabbath”?
4. What attitudes and values (eg. stopping, enjoying, playing) do you associate with the Sabbath. Make a list together and keep it for future sessions.
5. If you did the alternative welcome activity, look at your pie chart. In the light of the two biblical passages, what is your response to your own rhythms and patterns?
6. What is the difference between a “holy Sabbath” and a “day off” in the sense in which a day off is usually understood in our society?
7. How do you think we can practically keep the heart of the command about Sabbath in 21st century society?

Pray

Share with each other anything about your “rule of life” (from last week) on which you wanted to be accountable to the group. Pray for each other in this area.

Pray about any issues which arise for you out of this week's study.

Worship

Take time to pause simply to rest with God. Create a still atmosphere. Light a candle or play some music – eg. Be still and know that I am God”. Use some of the prayers on page 24 of Life Balance and/or the Course prayer:

Course Prayer

GOD of Eternity, teach us to pause.

GOD of Creation, teach us to wonder.

GOD of Sabbath, teach us to rest.

GOD of Delight, teach us to play.

GOD of the Poor, teach us to share

in your work of liberation

GOD of Love, reconciling us through Jesus Christ,

Fill our lives with your perfect peace.

Witness

- Pray – especially for the people on your cell list.
- Continue to make arrangements to do anything which has come out of your Growth Plan, as appropriate.
- Look at the week of prayer for the benefice. See when you might be able to commit to pray in that week and let the relevant person know.
- Give anyone who wants to the opportunity to sign up to have a Lent appointment with Sally

Time to Pause

Week beginning 17th Feb

INTRODUCTION: Lent is an opportunity to pause, to create space and to clear some of the clutter in our lopsided and overcrowded lives. This Lent, we are focussing on seeing Time as God’s gift and particularly on the way that we can create rhythms that draw us closer to Jesus in our everyday lives. Today, we introduce the concept of Sabbath in the bible and begin to reexamine our rhythms of work, rest and play in the light of Sabbath principles. We can think about Sabbath in 2 ways:

1. *A day – setting apart an entire day, one out of seven for feasting and resting and worship and play. This is a gift rather than a burden. If we don’t get this sort of pause time, our lives get less fruitful - like soil never left fallow.*
2. *An attitude – A Sabbath heart as well as a Sabbath day. A Sabbath heart is a heart which rests in Jesus even in the middle of a lot of coming and going.*

Welcome

Ask the group: What word, image or idea comes to mind when you hear the word Sabbath? Do this in whatever way suits your group eg. Ask people to write one idea on a piece of paper and put it in a basket, then give the scraps of paper out again so that everyone reads out someone else’s contribution.

(An alternative welcome activity can be found on page 20 of Life balance.)

Worship

Spend some time thanking God for these simple things on your lists.

And/or

Sing some songs of praise

And/or

Invite group members to sit comfortably and close their eyes and then lead them slowly through the contemplative exercise overleaf

Think back over your day.

Let your mind wander (without self-judgement be it approval or disapproval) and bring into focus anything for which you are grateful....

This might be an enjoyable experience, an achievement, a kind word, the sight of a raindrop on a rose petal or the very fact you can see at all. Often beautiful moments go unnoticed or are quickly forgotten or overshadowed by other painful experiences.

Relive the good and beautiful experiences now....

Bring them to mind and relish them.

(Pause)

What were your moods and feeling in these moments?

(Pause)

Now praise and thank God for all that was good about your day.

Word

Read Genesis 1.1-2.3 (You may wish to divide this passage into a section for each day and read it with different voices)

1. "God looked... and it was good" God is pleased with all he has made and on the seventh day, he pauses to engage with it and savour it. Share any experiences you have of pausing to savour the blessings of your life. What difference does that Sabbath-experience make to you?

*We rest on Sabbath because God has first done the same. In observing a Sabbath rhythm, we share in God's sense of celebration, taking time to pause in thankfulness and delight. The next passage emphasises this thankfulness. **Read Philipians 4.4-6***

2. How much of your conversation focuses on the good things in your life rather than the niggles and complaints? How can you learn new habits of thankfulness?
3. What one thing do you most want to celebrate about your journey of faith in Christ?
4. In what way will "celebrating the good" go against the flow amongst those with whom you live and work?
5. What are the benefits of living in the present moment?
6. Are there any attitudes or values you want to add to your Sabbath list as a result of this session?

Pray

Share with each other anything about your "rule of life" (from week 1) on which you wanted to be accountable to the group. Pray for each other in this area.

Pray about any issues which arise for you out of this week's study. If you wish, use some of the prayers on page 36-37 of Life Balance and/or the Course prayer:

Course Prayer

GOD of Eternity, teach us to pause.

GOD of Creation, teach us to wonder.

GOD of Sabbath, teach us to rest.

GOD of Delight, teach us to play.

GOD of the Poor, teach us to share

in your work of liberation

GOD of Love, reconciling us through Jesus Christ,

Fill our lives with your perfect peace.

Witness

- Pray – especially for the people on your cell list.
- Continue to make arrangements to do anything which has come out of your Growth Plan, as appropriate.
- Look at the week of prayer for the benefice. See when you might be able to commit to pray in that week and let the relevant person know.
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In the week

Make a list of your 7 wonders of the world or “These are a few of my favourite things” or “reasons to be cheerful”. Bring them to your next cell meeting.

Time to Celebrate

Week beginning 24th Feb

INTRODUCTION: Lent is an opportunity to pause, to create space and to clear some of the clutter in our lopsided and overcrowded lives. This Lent, we are focussing on seeing Time as God’s gift and particularly on the way that we can create rhythms that draw us closer to Jesus in our everyday lives. Today, we celebrate our life in God and focus our minds on habits of thankfulness, freedom from anxiety and the gift of the present moment.

Welcome

Bring some tasty food to share.

Invite group members each to make a list of 5 things –

Their Best view

Best sound

Best Smell

Best Taste

Best Sensation through Touch

(eg. stroking your dog, paddling in a warm sea)

Read out your lists as you eat together

OR

Make a celebration collage – using paper, glue, feathers, material, magazine cuttings, pot pourri, glitter... invite people to represent on the collage things in their lives they feel good about.

Time to Rest

Week beginning 2nd March

INTRODUCTION: This session explores what it means to rest and considers themes of grace and restoration in the light of the biblical teaching about Sabbath.

Welcome

What is the most restful place you have ever been to? What makes it restful?

OR Share your lists of 7 wonders of the world etc made last week.

Worship

Light a candle and encourage people to focus on something which symbolises Sabbath rest. (see pages 11-12 Life Balance for ideas)

Invite group members to clench their fists and then slowly open their hands, placing them palm upwards as a sign that they are letting go of tensions and anxieties and opening themselves to receiving peace and refreshment.

Say....

Jesus said, "Come unto me all who are weary and carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest"

Listen to some quiet music for about 5 minutes receiving God's peace.

Course Prayer

GOD of Eternity, teach us to pause. GOD of Creation, teach us to wonder.

GOD of Sabbath, teach us to rest. GOD of Delight, teach us to play.

GOD of the Poor, teach us to share in your work of liberation

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Word

Read Deuteronomy 5.12-15

Consider some or all of the following questions:

1. What is the link between Sabbath rest and the memory of slavery in Deuteronomy 5?
2. Is rest the same as relaxation?
3. What does it mean to keep something "holy"?
4. In what ways (if any) are you a slave driver? Or is there something which "drives" you?
5. What attitudes characterise "driven" people and how do these differ from Sabbath attitudes?
6. What do Sabbath rest principles have to say to society's working practices?
7. If time read the story of how God looks after Elijah in 1 Kings 19.4-8. What is your response to this story?

Pray

Share with each other anything about your "rule of life" (from week 1) on which you wanted to be accountable to the group. Pray for each other in this area.

Pray about any issues which arise for you out of this week's study. If you wish, use some of the prayers on page 46-47 of Life Balance and/or the Course prayer:

Witness

- Pray – especially for the people on your cell list.
- Continue to make arrangements to do anything which has come out of your Growth Plan, as appropriate.
- Look at the week of prayer for the benefice. See when you might be able to commit to pray in that week and let the relevant person know.
- Give anyone who wants to the opportunity to sign up to have a Lent appointment with Sally