



Creating a Rule/Rhythm of Life

The rule of life was developed by St Benedict to bring balance and order to the monastic life. We prefer to call it a rhythm of life. In religious orders it is still used to form their daily life. A rhythm of life is about providing a structure to help us lead holy lives that are different to the world we live in. I believe it can also bring us closer to God in all we do.

God helping you

Here's what I want you to do. Take your everyday, ordinary life - your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking around life - and place it before God as an offering.

Embracing what God does for you is the best thing that you can do for him.

Don't become so well adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognise what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings out the best of you and develops well-formed maturity in you.

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

I have shared before I have a rhythm of life, and I am now in the process of rewriting it after some growth in my spiritual life. This is important to note; your rhythm is not set in stone and can change and develop as you grow spiritually. A rhythm does not

replace the commands of God in the Bible, rather it is a tool to guide you into living the life that God has given you.

A rhythm of life is not for everyone and that's ok. Having a rhythm of life goes hand in hand with those who are seeking and longing to be with God using spiritual disciplines that are centuries old.

I have suggested some questions below to get you started in reflection. This is then followed by questions to help put your thoughts into a rhythm. The one you write will be unique to you. You can be as creative as you like, write it in poem form, as a list, illustrate it, this is for you.

I believe we do need to set aside time for this, in a place where there will be no distractions. Ask God to lead you, be open to him and don't rush off allow time to hear and respond.

Have your questions before you with a pen and journal to write down your thoughts. How you spend time with God will vary; you may find walking, being silent, holding a pebble or a cross as you pray helps you to listen. Experiment and see what suits you.

The questions for reflection:

1. When am I aware of God? What am doing? It could be out walking being silent, in the Antioch gathering, praising, reading the Bible. It might not even be a 'spiritual' activity; There will probably be more than one place and it is to try writing these down.
2. What keeps me connected to God? A hasty remark from someone, a disappointment, demands from family and work and church can sometimes runaway with our time and our peace. What practices bring you back to God again and into his peace? Is it a worship song, confessing a favourite scripture, taking time out to read?
3. The flip side of these questions are what or who pulls me away from God? Who or what crowds him out? These questions are valid too.
4. What are the areas where you would like to grow? Is it prayer style e.g. meditation, understanding scripture?
5. What areas would you like to deepen?
6. Where do you want to be stretched?

The questions for writing your rhythm of life:

Once you have some clarity ask yourself:

1. What do I need to put in place so that I can be stretched, find peace or balance, what activities or practices will support them?
2. What commitments do you want to make? These can be separated into daily, weekly, monthly, annually, and seasonally. Consider talking through your rhythm with someone who will be able to guide with wisdom.

Above all your rhythm should be easy and achievable and open to change, because you will change. It should be a guide for you, something you can turn to, to remind you of what you value and what life is all about.

Happy rhythm writing!