



Rhythms.

the way of Jesus

What to Expect:

This booklet is for you to use over the next several weeks during our series, Rhythms: The Way of Jesus. Remember personal learnings from this series on Spiritual Practices by taking notes and spending time journaling.

There are several Spiritual Practices, the main ones are:

Inward: Meditation, Prayer, Fasting, Study

Outward: Simplicity, Solitude, Submission, Service

Corporate: Confession, Worship, Guidance, Celebration

We will be addressing some of these during this series; if this series motivates you to learn more, there are some great resources listed at the end of this booklet.

For each practice highlighted in a weekend service, you will find the following:

- The Scripture and “bottom line” will be used in the weekend service, plus additional texts for you to reference.
- Five **Reflection Questions** and five **Test Drive Opportunities** for each practice. We do not expect you to do all of them. We have tried to provide questions and exercises which will help you as an individual, with your family or with your small group. Pick which ones work best for your setting.
- We also want to recognize that the ordinary parts of our days can provide opportunities for worship and a spiritual experience. For example, when you make dinner or drive to work with a focus on God and a mindset that this is one way to serve God and your family, it can become a spiritual experience.

Blessings as you step into Spiritual Practices - maybe it's a continuation of life-long exercises, trying something you haven't tried for a while or perhaps this is a new experience. Regardless, be gentle with yourself as you grow and learn. While we want to be transformed by the practices with which Jesus modeled for us, we need to remember it is an ongoing process.

“So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: 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 you can do for him.” - Romans 12:1 (The Message)

Rhythm of Lent.

Scripture Passage: Luke 4:1-2

Supporting Texts: Isaiah 58:5-7, Matthew 6:16-18, Psalm 69:10, Matthew 9:14

Bottom Line: We are not accustomed to denying ourselves anything. Everything we want and need is accessible by a run to the store or restaurant, or a click on Amazon. The purpose of fasting is to re-focus our attention on God as we follow Jesus' example of choosing to sacrifice something.

Lenten Fasting Ideas: Food (meals, sweets), alcohol, social media, television, etc.

► Reflection Questions

1. When you feel empty or restless, how do you try to fill the emptiness? What does your response tell you about your heart?

2. What is your attitude toward fasting or self-denial?

3. Can you think of any ways you regularly deny yourself (or delay gratification)



4. When has self-denial (or delayed satisfaction) brought something positive into your life?

5. If you have ever tried fasting, what was the experience like for you?

▶ Test Drive Opportunities

1. For a period of one week, fast from media, sports, shopping, reading or use of a particular screen. Dedicate this time to God. What feelings arise in you? What thoughts interrupt your prayer?
2. Fast one meal a week. Spend your mealtime in prayer. Talk to Jesus about what His self-denial means to you.
3. Make two lists - one of needs and the other of wants. Ask God to show you where you need to fast from some of your wants. Offer to God the time you would spend hankering after your wants.
4. During Lent, particularly focus on Jesus and His temptations in the wilderness. Enter the story in your imagination. What do you and Jesus talk about? How are you tempted to indulge yourself? How does it help you to talk to Jesus about this?
5. When facing a challenge, decide on a fast that gives you time to seek God's strength in your journey.

Rhythm of Simplicity.

Scripture Passage: Matthew 6:19-21

Supporting Texts: Matthew 8:20, Psalm 62:10b, Philippians 4:11-13, Matthew 5:37

Bottom Line: When I untangle my life, I can focus on what is really important. Jesus modeled a simple life which can feel impossible in 2021 (although COVID managed to challenge our schedules). Can we take an honest look at our “stuff” and determine what moves can be made toward simplicity in 2021?

► Reflection Questions

1. How has the “more is better” mentality shaped you?

2. Do you envy those who have more things or more opportunities than you?

3. How much of your identity is wrapped up in what you own and where you go?



4. What is it like for you to give away things you still want and like?

5. When have you downsized or worked through purging a room? What was that like for you?

▶ Test Drive Opportunities

1. Ask God to help you speak the simple truth. Practice speaking simply - no double meanings or half-truths to put you in the best light. Let this practice help you become aware of when you rationalize, deny, blame and spin.
2. Uncomplicate your life by choosing a few areas you wish to practice "letting go." Clean out the garage, basement, closet or attic. Go on a simple vacation. Eat more simply. What is this like for you?
3. If someone admires something of yours, give it away. Find out just how attached you are to your things.
4. Make a catalog of all the gadgets you have in your home, from the dishwasher to the lawnmower. Which gadgets have made you freer? Which could you share? Which could you get rid of and not really miss?
5. Where have you complicated your life with God? Consider what actually brings you into the presence of Christ. Spend time there.

Rhythm of Rest & Delight.

Scripture Passage: Mark 2: 23-28

Supporting Textt: Exodus 20:8-11

Bottom Line: A “free day” or “day off” may seem like a luxury many of us cannot imagine or even afford. But just stopping is a biblical standard from creation and is assigned a day. That day is named “Sabbath.” As we see with fresh eyes what the Sabbath was meant for, we hope to rediscover the rhythms of rest and delight!

► Reflection Questions

1. As you were growing up, how did your family observe Sabbath? Have you kept any of those traditions? Why or why not?

2. What difficulties or compulsions make it hard for you to stop and take a Sabbath?

3. How does taking a Sabbath enhance your enjoyment and worship of God?



4. What makes a Sabbath day nourishing and replenishing to you?

5. What happens when you go without regular rhythms that allow you to rest in God?

▶ Test Drive Opportunities

1. Gather your family together to discuss how to arrange your Sabbath for refreshment, renewal and relationships. Ask “How do you intentionally leave the school and work-week behind?”
2. Let everyone share one thing they love to do on your Sabbath (whether it happens on Sunday or another day of the week). Share what makes Sundays difficult for you. If getting to church is a hurried time that brings distress to the family, spend some time talking together about how to take the pressure off “getting out the door on time.” Should you consider going to church at another time? Could someone else fix breakfast? Would they rather just drink juice and share a family brunch? What can be done the night before to make it easier to get going in the morning? How can you approach Sabbath in a way that does not force, rush or demand?
3. Begin your Sabbath gently on Saturday evening. Light a candle. Invite the presence of Christ to guide you through your Sabbath. Eat with friends and family. Speak peace to the others in your home. Go to bed early. Pray for Christ to give you a deep, refreshing sleep. Rest in His arms. Commit your dreams to the Lord.

Rhythm of Remembrance.

Scripture Passage: Luke 22:7-23

Supporting Text: Exodus 12

Bottom Line: One of the sacraments observed by Faith Church is the Lord's Supper, which was instituted by Jesus to commemorate His death, to symbolize the New Covenant, to point to the fellowship of a redeemed people gathered at His table and to anticipate the feast we will share in Heaven. The Lord's Supper reflects the Passover meal at the time of the Exodus (Old Testament) and was instituted by Jesus during His final meal with His disciples (New Testament).

The bread and the cup point to Jesus' broken body and shed blood, and are the definitive symbols of the New Covenant in Christ. The bread and the cup speak eloquently as symbols of Christ's redemptive work at Calvary, and they reflect the fellowship of the people of God in Christ and of the coming day when a redeemed people will gather in the presence of the Savior.

► Reflection Questions

1. Spend time reflecting on the personal meaning of the Lord's Table.

2. What is the Lord's Supper experience like for you?



3. What do you hope to receive at the Lord's Table?

4. Describe an experience of participating in the Lord's Supper at a church where the custom is different from your own.

5. Reflect on this phrase, "I desire to be nourished by the sweet depths of redemption."

▶ Test Drive Opportunities

1. Prepare yourself for Communion ahead of time. Read John 13:1-17. Imagine you are there at the table with Jesus. What are your feelings and thoughts? How does it feel to have Jesus wash your feet? How does it feel to drink the cup knowing your own betrayals? Confess your sins and then attend Communion with what is in your heart to say to God.
2. Notice those who prepare Communion at your campus. Write a note of thanks for their service in helping make this experience special for you.

Rhythm of Celebration.

Scripture Passage: Philippians 4:4-9

Supporting Text: Psalm 145

Bottom Line: What in this life is worthy of celebrating? We think we get it right when we manufacture celebration out of obligation as a response to Scripture, such as “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice,” (Philippians 4:4, ESV). The problem lies in our own hearts which aren’t ready to celebrate properly. Author Richard J. Foster notes in *Celebration of Discipline*, “We will not know genuine joy until there is a transforming work within us.” Foster cautions us not to “pump up people with joy when in reality nothing happened in their lives.” When we’re free from the habits and routines that deprive us of a chance to experience true joy, we can begin to celebrate. When we can fully grasp our own salvation and transformation, celebration is possible.

“Celebration is not something that falls on our heads,” Foster writes. “It is the result of a consciously chosen way of thinking and living. When we choose this way, the healing and redemption of Christ will break into the inner recesses of our lives and relationships and the inevitable result will be joy.”

► Reflection Questions

1. Where are you most prone to celebrate God? Alone? With others? In worship? In music? In nature? What does this tell you about how God made you and how you most naturally meet with Him?



2. How is your celebration enhanced or curtailed by your ability to remember the past, live in the moment or anticipate the future?

3. When you see others celebrating God in a way that is new or foreign to you, what goes on in your mind and heart?

4. Is there a heaviness about you, an overly serious side or an entrenched critical spirit? How might celebrating God affect these traits and move you into new areas of transformation?

5. Who do you know who really celebrates God and life? What attracts you to them?

▶ Test Drive Opportunities

1. Recall all of God's gifts, provisions, guidance and love toward you. Write a song of celebration, make a collage that represents your joy, write a poem of praise, play music and dance before the Lord, or memorize a verse of praise and repeat it all through the coming days
2. Familiarize yourself with the church calendar. If you don't know about the church year, do a web search for "church calendar." Consider ways you can go all-out in your celebration of Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany and All Saints Day this year. Plan a way of celebrating God alone or with friends.
3. Pay attention to people who give you joy. Ask God how you might celebrate them in a way that encourages them.
4. Identify the place you most readily connect with God. Is it in nature? Listening to worship music? Participating in corporate worship? Solitude? Go to that place. What do you want to tell God about the joy you receive there?
5. Consider how God loves you. Read Zephaniah 3:17. Then be still and listen. How is God celebrating you? Celebrate the God who celebrates you. Intentionally ask for the gift of appreciating yourself the way God does.

▶ Notes

Rhythm of Focus.

Scripture Passage: Mark 6:30-32

Supporting Texts: Luke 5:15-16, Matthew 14:12-13, Luke 6:12-13, Romans 12:2

Bottom Line: To pattern our lives as disciples of Jesus requires a look at His habits as a man. Even the Son of God took time away from others to rest and recharge, be alone with the Father, and even to mourn and process on His own. How can you pattern your life to receive this rest and time of connection with God? What stands in the way? Jesus didn't let gathering crowds deter Him from this connection. He saw this as essential in His ministry and we should as well.

► Reflection Questions

1. How and when do you resist or avoid being alone?

2. When have you felt most comfortable being alone?

3. What sense of God do you have when you are alone?



4. When do you find it easiest to focus your mind or heart?

5. How might the tendency to do everything quickly affect your ability to meditate?

▶ Test Drive Opportunities

1. In a place where you cannot be interrupted, intentionally place yourself in the presence of your setting. Recognize that the Lord is as near as your own breathing. Inhale God's breath of life, exhale all that weighs on you. Simply be alone with God. When it is time to return to others, leave the setting gently. Carry the sense of being alone with God with you into the rest of your day.
2. Make your time in the shower each morning your alone time with God. Present yourself to your Creator - all of your body, all of the dirt that has accumulated in your soul, all that God has made you to be. Let the water from the shower remind you of the water of life that nourishes and changes you. Let the warmth touch you with love. Thank Him for the alone time He spends with you.
3. Take a walk, meditating on the handiwork of God. The lilies of the field and the birds of the air spoke to Jesus of God's care (Matthew 6:26-31). How does God speak to you in His creation?

Rhythm of Gathering.

Scripture Passage: Ecclesiastes 4:9-16

Supporting Texts: Ephesians 4:1-16, Psalm 133, Matthew 18:20, Galatians 6:1-2, Hebrews 10:24-25

Bottom Line: While we often lean toward isolation and independence, Scripture (from the very beginning) reminds us we are created to live in community with God and with others. We were built to grow through relationships. Jesus modeled this life of relationships throughout His ministry on Earth.

► Reflection Questions

1. How have small group experiences affected your spiritual journey?

2. Who do you talk to about your spiritual life? How has a discerning, encouraging and challenging friend helped you in your journey?

3. What are the positives of being in a small group?



4. Do you turn to someone in a time of crisis or do you wait until the crisis is over to talk to someone? What does this tell you about yourself?

5. Who do you know now who is an example of where you want to be spiritually? What is stopping you from engaging with this person as an intentional spiritual friend?

▶ Test Drive Opportunities

1. If you have never been part of a small group experience, ask the Lord if now is the time to join one. Consider what kind of small group you would like to be involved in: a discipleship group (D3 group or the Journey), a Bible study, a support group (such as Celebrate Recovery or Fresh Hope) or a serving group. Ask God to help you find a group you can journey with. Contact your campus for information and assistance.
2. Three people are enough to begin a triad. So if a smaller group is more attractive to you, ask two other people to join you in a triad. Faith Church has resources to help.
3. Take a friend inventory: draw a lifeline and divide it into seven-year segments. Put the initials of friends who were important to you in each segment. What do you notice about your friendships? What kind of friends do you tend to gather around you? What does this tell you about yourself?

Additional Resources.

Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* (InterVarsity Press, 2015); most of the “Reflection Questions” and “Test Drive Opportunities” in this study guide are found in this book.

Julie Canlis, *A Theology of the Ordinary* (Wenatchee, WA: Godspeed Press, 2017).

Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1978). A study guide is also available through The Bookstore at Faith Dyer.

Randy Reese and Robert Loane, *Growing Up - A Lifelong Journey* (Sioux Falls, SD: Vantage Point3, 2008). This book is available through The Bookstore at Faith Dyer.

Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991).

Missed a weekend service? Watch or listen at [WeAreFaith.org/Messages](https://www.WeAreFaith.org/Messages).

A person is shown from the chest down, wearing a dark, textured sweater, sitting at a wooden table and reading an open book. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm, low-key light source from the right, creating a contemplative atmosphere. The background is dark and out of focus.

Faith
C H U R C H

WeAreFaith.org