

Creating A Rule of Life

A trellis for fruitful living



A **Rule of Life** is a way of helping us to think through what's really important to us. When we feel we're getting side-tracked or distracted, we can refer back to our **Rule of Life** to remind us – and our family – of who we want to become, how we want to live, and the action we need to take.

A **Rule of Life** is a way of intentionally considering and ordering our lives - especially towards God. A **Rule of Life** is meant to function as scaffolding/trellis for our lives to help us prioritize what is important and not just what is urgent (with a mind towards spiritual growth and movement towards God).

Once you've established 'what's important,' you (and your family) can set about writing a **Rule of Life**. If you are doing this as a family, remember to consult everyone so that it is a collaborative process. If you are a 'rule's driven' person, remember *grace!* A **Rule of Life** helps set goals but shouldn't become a burden!

A **Rule of Life** can take on many forms (there are plenty of templates you can download). It can be expressed in a chart/table, as a colourful poster or in just a few paragraphs. It is also a **living** document that will change as your lives change. It will reviewing and updating from time to time.

Whatever it ends up being, it needs to be built out of reflection on who you are, who you want to be, what you value, and how you currently spend your time.

Your **Rule of Life** should ultimately help you translate your **values into action**. Use the prompts below to do the reflecting work before attempting to write your **Rule of Life**.

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For Reflection

Who do I Admire and Why?

- Think of four people you admire and answer why for each person. Write this down. What connects between them? What disconnects?

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Moving Closer to God

- How do you know when an activity or time moves you closer to God?
How do you know when you move away from God?
- What are the markers of when you are in a good state/place?
- Name activities that bring you to life – how often do you practice live-giving activities?

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For Further Reflection

- Carve out space this week to sit and listen. Consider what is **important** rather than what's urgent.

- What kind of person are you called to be? What kind of person do you want to be?
- What are three of the most meaningful compliments you have ever received?
- What is one thing that will make you feel disappointed if you can't do it or be it?

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Rule of Life – An Example

Having identified a few things that are *really* important to you, your 'rule' or 'trellis' could look something like this:

My Rule of Life

February 2021

I committed to nurturing my relationships – connecting more regularly with old friends, and also investing in a few new friendships.

I am committed to looking after myself and living well. I need to exercise more, drink less caffeine and more water! I also need more mental/social stimulation to feed me creatively.

I am committed to connecting with nature and the beauty of creation – vital for my 'soul'.

I am committed to environmental issues and caring for creation – I want to become a better 'steward' – I want to cultivate a deeper appreciation for the world.

I am committed to being part of something transformative – which has local flourishing and social justice at its heart.

I am committed to growing in faith and journeying with God's People – my local church family. I am committed to serving my church community and joining in with community-life (committing to no more than two church-related activities a week).

Nurturing relationships: I will:

- Call or message a close friend every day
- Go for a 5 minute walk every day to talk with God
- Organise a date with my partner once a month
- Attend Home Group/Nurture Group even when only 3 of us attend
- Join a local interest group so that I can get to know more people locally

Looking after myself /living well: I will:

- Read a book/listen to a podcast once a month (join a Book Club?)
- Go for an extended walk once a week – in the countryside/country park
- Treat myself/the family to a healthy takeaway once a month
- Join a conservation group (see 'interest group' above)
- Start saving up to see the 'Northern Lights' (holiday)

Serving: I will:

- Join the Hospitality team and serve on the Coffee Bar once a month
- I will attend the next *Eco-Church* event

- I will make a one-off donation to the *Reloved* event for the work they do in the community

- I will pray for the *Thursday Club* and its ministry amongst elderly people in Woodthorpe.

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Conclusions and invitations

There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to establishing a **Rule of Life** - you may not even want to call it a 'rule'. It is simply supposed to be a helpful tool to help us identify what's important to us and to prioritise the actions that will bring us life and make us fruitful.

It could be that the three lockdowns of 2020/2021 have been beneficial in helping you to identify 'what's important'. Equally you may be feeling more *disorientated* and unsettled than ever before. You may feel that you've 'lost your way' as a **Home Group** or even in relation to our church community. The distance and disconnect of 2020/2021 will have affected us all differently.

As we ease out of lockdown in the coming months, we will all need to decompress and reflect on the potential 'fallout' of these past months. We may feel pain, anger, disappointment, loss, relief, or euphoria. For some of us lockdown will have yielded silver linings and unexpected treasures, for others it will have been nothing short of traumatic. We would like to invite our church family to use Lent as an opportunity to 'check in' with ourselves and to share where we're 'at' with others. If you would value a conversation – no matter how delicate or painful – with Matt or myself, we are available to listen, to talk and to pray.