

Some of the main areas to consider in addition to worship are confession, your offerings, prayer, scripture readings and other reading, sharing your faith, ministry, and retreats. We will briefly look at each of these items in turn.

Confession—Make time for a daily confession of sin. This is not to beat yourself up, but to have a real time with God to consider the ways in which you have fallen short of the mark set by Jesus. Turn from the behaviors you know to be wrong, confess your sins, and ask for God's forgiveness each day.

Offering—Consider how much you give to your church and other charitable organizations. What does your giving say about your relationship with God? Do you pay more in greens fees or movie rentals? Did you spend more on Christmas gifts over the last couple of months than what you gave to God over the previous year? These are ways to consider your giving back to God in comparison to the other ways you spend your money.

Prayerfully consider what you give. It should never be because of the needs of your church. Instead we give in response to God's love, because God asks us to do so. Revisit your giving at least annually to reconsider if your giving to support the work of Christ's church is in line with your own beliefs.

Prayer—This does not have to be a structured time with God. Certainly God

hears us whenever we speak to him. But, you may want to consider how to best fit times of prayer into your schedule. This could be while commuting to work, or in the quiet time before others in the house awake. Select a time that works for you.

Scripture—The Bible is not a dose of medicine to be taken and you don't need a degree in theology to gain from reading it. If you've had trouble reading the Bible routinely, try starting by using a study Bible, which includes notes to help with questions that may come up in your reading. There are many good study Bibles. I recommend the New International Version Study Bible, which is widely available. Start by reading the Gospels.

When you are ready to dig deeper into the scripture, your rule of life will want to include a plan for reading through the entire Bible. The most difficult way to do this is to start with Genesis and read your way to Revelation. My wife and I first read through the Bible together by using the *One Year Bible*, with readings from the Old and New Testaments, Psalm and Proverbs every day. We read through the Bible two years in a row in about 20 minutes a day.

Other Reading—In addition to the Bible, you should consider finding other good books to read. These will not need to be limited to Christian books, of course. But you should look for ways to

alternate spiritual reading with other books. Ask your pastor or Christian friends for book recommendations.

Sharing Faith—I add sharing your faith to the list for a rule of life as we should all consider how we go about this important part of our own faith journeys. While I don't personally find handing out tracts or going door to door to be the most effective means of evangelism, that doesn't mean you can't share your faith with others.

The best way to add this to your rule of life is probably to pray that God will lay on your heart a few friends and family members who you can pray for. Then if God opens up opportunities to speak to those people about your faith do so. If not, continue to hold them in prayer. In time, God will provide a natural way for faith to come into the conversation. Just be open to those opportunities.

Ministry—Each Christian, by virtue of your baptism, is a minister of the Gospel. For most of us, this means being the sort of accountant, teacher, secretary, etc. that God calls you to be. It also means being the sort of husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, friend that God calls you to be. In addition, it will include ministries in or out of the church such as working with scouting or building houses with Habitat for Humanity. Consider what areas of your life are ministries. Consider what ministry God might be calling you into.

“Life is what happens to you while you are making other plans.”

—John Lennon.

If you don't set your own priorities, others will set your priorities for you. Nowhere is this truer than with your spiritual life.

If you don't set your own agenda, life will overtake you and leave no time for God. One way to set your priorities is to create, and in time modify, a rule of life. A rule of life sets out priorities.

While a rule can include guidance on family and work life, this brochure will restrict itself to a spiritual rule of life.

The Basics

The basic idea is to note the important elements of your own spiritual life along with some plan for how you will carry it out. For example, any spiritual rule of life should include worship. “I will attend church on Sundays and Wednesdays when I am well.”

For the rule of life to work, you will need to write it down, keep the list handy and look it over from time to time. Keep what you write simple and specific. Do not use permissive language such as “I will try” as all of us try to do things. Write instead, “I will” or “I promise.”

Retreat—Finally, I add retreats to a rule of life, though this would only be an annual event in most cases. Most churches will offer some times during the year to go off for a weekend to be more intentional about your spiritual development.

Take It Easy!

When creating a rule of life, do not overdo it. You are not creating a blueprint for being a spiritual superhero. The goal is to set out some spiritual priorities you can keep. You will be better off to start too small. In time you can revisit your rule and make changes. You don't want to overwhelm yourself with too much to do. Time spent on your spiritual journey is not meant to be one more list of chores in a busy life. Tending to your faith is more akin to giving yourself a source of rest and refreshment in a world too short on both.

—The Rev. Frank Logue, Vicar
King of Peace, Kingsland



Creating a Rule of Life

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