A *Rhythm of Life* for Church Leaders

Deep · Bold · Daring
Toward 2035

*A primary role for church leaders is to joyfully model lives of deep **spirituality**, bold **discipleship** and daring **justice**.*

From the Methodist side of our United Church tradition, John Wesley had 3 simple rules:
1) Do no harm 2) Do good 3) Stay in love with God

Likewise, the earliest expression of Methodism (the Holy Club at Oxford) had 9 practices:

1. Have an intention to yield one's life to God completely, for God's glory, and become like Jesus Christ
2. Rise at 4 or 5 a.m. to pray
3. Fast two days a week until 3 p.m.
4. Meet regularly to discuss Scripture and other Christian texts
5. Express accountability (confession, how is it with your soul?) at those regular meetings
6. Receive communion weekly.
7. Read and meditate on scripture daily
8. Engage in compassionate action for the poor, prisoners, and the elderly (and)
9. Pursue simpler living. (adapted from https://ministrymatters.com/2014-09-08_john_wesley_s_rule_of_life/)

Those might be a bit intense for some of us! However, drawing on those practices, you are invited to consider the following areas to discern for yourself, a rhythm (or rule) of life. The intent is not to r put more pressure on you to do more stuff. The intention is that, with grace and joy, you are freed up to prioritize what you, as a leader in Christ's church might do or be to prioritize deep spirituality, bold discipleship and daring justice and make life more sustainable!

Here are some areas you might consider:

- Individual practices / disciplines – Prayer or meditation – such as the daily office, centering prayer, devotions, fasting (i.e. from devices, stuff, consumer therapy, self-soothing behaviours, types of food, unjust practises). What individual practices are you called to, and at what frequency? Are you praying for your family, your community, the wider church and the world daily (a prayer list?)? Do you have times of silence/listening for God?

- Shared practices - Are there specific practices that we can commit to with each other or with the wider Church? In clusters, groups of colleagues? How does your prayer come alongside the church locally, regionally, nationally, globally? Could we agree to pray and gracefully support each other in shared practices? This could be daily prayer, or a day of fasting in a specific liturgical season. It could be together, online, or apart – but with a knowledge that we are praying in unison.

- Rest / recreation – Sabbath, fun, rest - "rest is resistance"! Are you taking (at least) a day and/or some other rhythm daily to re-create? Have you enshrined that day in your calendar so it holds and only break it for a pastoral or family emergency (if there is no one else who can do it)?

- Learning – Nurturing the mind. In what ways are you committing to deepening your knowledge toward discipleship of Jesus?

- Hands /Creativity – Art, music, craft, sport. How are you using your hands or body for creative output?

- Retreat & pilgrimage - Are you setting extended time away on a regular basis? Do you do a mini-retreat monthly? A longer retreat, yearly?

- (Grand)parenting, partnering practices – How are you honouring your commitments to be a partner/spouse and/or parent? How are you creating a rhythm of times together AND times apart? How is the discipleship of children worked into your schedule?

- Receiving direction / mentoring – Are you receiving spiritual direction or have a mentor? Do you have a person or people to hold you in the joys and struggles of your ministry, family, rhythm?

- Giving Direction / mentoring – Are you offering concrete mentoring to laity, students, clergy?

- Mental and physical health - Somatic movement; walking, running, etc., counselling or therapy, trauma and/or grief work? How are you taking care of your body and mind as part of your rhythm?

- Reflecting God's Abundance - Tithes, offerings, donations, sharing of gifts of all kinds. How are you giving of your time & finances on a regular, recurring basis as a reflection of God's abundance?

- Local Presence and hospitality - How are you called to be present in your local context? How are you sent out and/or welcoming the stranger? Acts of public witness? Do you have space to do this at regular intervals? Is this a part of your calendar?

- Worship – Where / when are you participating in worship that is feeding your soul and connecting you with God? Are you participating in receiving the word and sacraments, confession, corporate praise? Are you able to receive/participate fully when you are leading, or do you need to seek other outlets for this?

- Ecclesial presence – How are you called to deepen connexional and/or wider church presence and/or collegiality? What concrete commitments, steps or conversations reflect your commitment to the wide church as the body of Christ?

- Simplicity – What ways might you simplify your life, practice 'downward mobility' and foster the common good? How are you caring for creation?

For a template of a Rule/Rhythm see here (from "The Good Way")

For Rhythm of Life workshops in groups, clusters or congregations:
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