

Developing a Personal Way of Life



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(see also the 'Waymarks' booklet)

Developing a way of life is like choosing a route on a road atlas or a SATNAV. It's about mindfulness. It's about living 'intentionally' day by day

Writing a way of life helps us when the "tyranny of the urgent" takes over our lives . It helps us by clarifying our "yes's" and "no's" before we're confronted by the onslaught of life and we're forced into being reactive in our decision making. It helps us be proactive. It helps us develop a healthy rhythm to our lives

A way of life invites you deeper into the question: What kind of person is God forming in me right now?

The practice of designing a way or (as it is often known) 'rule' goes back to the communities of St. Benedict in the sixth century. This purposeful way of sharing life ordered his monastic groups. It provided a shape to their common life.

A rule can be fashioned either for personal or corporate use. The Community of Soul Friends has a simply structured way of life which we apply to our own life. A Way of Life is something which is achievable not out of reach. Details will change over time, just as we change over time.

The Way is about habits rather than goals. A way of life is a habit system. When we talk about habits, we're talking about spiritual disciplines and life practices. Details will change over time, just as we change over time.

A sustainable system of healthy, spiritual habits is better than goal setting. Our habits make our days, and our days make our lives. The idea is to map out a system of habits and then (with the help of Soul friend if it helps) try to live it out.

This is not about an ideal which is beyond our reach, it's about something which is flexible, workable and achievable. You can work your way through the questions below, prayerfully on your own or, as we recommend, connect with a Soul Friend or with others in a small group.

Developing a personal Way of Life is all about finding freedom to truly live.

1. *Prayer*

A rhythm of prayer is the bedrock of our life with God. It does not have to be onerous and should not be guilt-inducing, but it will require a sense of discipline. The community offers a very simple rhythm of prayer: morning, noon and night which is intended as a starting point and as an aid to creating space for God in the midst of busy lives. We also have access to a wide range of other resources and tools which might work for you.

Questions	My Response
What times of day do you feel most alert?	
Can you identify times in the day when you can stop, even for a few minutes and seek God? When are these times?	
Where are you going to pray? Do you have a special place? Will you pray 'on the go'? At work, in the car on the bus or train? While walking or running/cycling?	
How will you pray? The community short form? Another form? Will you use some daily readings or a Bible reading plan?	

2. Rhythm of Work & Rest

Along with a rhythm of prayer comes a rhythm for the whole of life which includes work & service of God and others (both paid/unpaid), as well as times of rest and time for re-creation in our lives. This is an antidote to the often- hectic nature of 21st century life. Work is a gift from God whether it is paid or unpaid, voluntary or just going about the things of every day life.

Questions	My Response
What are you doing which gets in the way of you living a more balanced rhythm of life?	
How much time do you spend: On work? On rest? On prayer? On hobbies? Serving others?	
Is there an imbalance? In what way?	
Take a look at a typical: Day Week Month Year How can you make space for the things you're struggling to do?	

3. *Simplicity*

Life can become complicated and cluttered. How can you develop simplicity of heart, speech, stuff and pleasure? What in your life is helpful or unhelpful as you seek to live a simpler life in tune with God and with the rhythms of nature he has created?

Questions	My Response
What clutters your spirit?	
What de-energises you? What can you cut out or approach differently?	
What clutters your home or work space? What can you give away?	
What activities are you doing too much of? What can you reduce/let go of?	
What relationships bring you life? Which drain you? How can this be managed?	

4. *Learning & Growth*

A Christian is a follower of Jesus, a learner, disciple or apprentice. This is a life-long relationship and journey in which we never stop learning. We all learn in different ways and have preferred learning styles. What works for you? Reading and writing, audio, visual, hands on, perhaps learning with others too?

Questions	My Response
The Bible—how can you engage with God’s Word in different and life giving ways?	
Creation—What can you learn from the world around you? How can you be intentional about this?	
People—How can you learn from others through Reading? Listening? Discussion?	
How can you create space to open your life up to continues learning?	

5. *Serving Others*

Christians are called to be agents of God's Kingdom in the world; caring about the things God cares about, seeking God's purposes and guidance; making a difference wherever and however he calls us. The pattern Jesus established was one of disciples making more disciples, who then go out, bringing hope to the world in all sorts of ways.

Questions	My Response
How does God want you to make a difference to others? What are your Frontlines?	
How can you join in with God's work in the world? Close to home? Further afield?	
How can you encourage others in their apprenticeship to Jesus?	
Might you be willing to be a Soul Friend to someone else, now or in the future?	

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