

LENT AT CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
PONTE VEDRA BEACH



# ANCHORS FOR THE SOUL

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ADULT GUIDE



# A RULE OF LIFE

Each of us follows a rule of life, whether we realize it or not.

How we work, play, eat, sleep, and interact with others  
reflects our commitments and priorities.

Every day is awash in small choices that shape our lives,  
as individuals, households, and communities.

Yet many of us feel adrift, swept this way and that by the  
pressures of the day. We spend more time reacting than  
acting; more time on the next task in front of us  
than on the things we know matter most of all.

We yearn for balance and purpose with each passing day.

How can we live differently?



## THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

Benedict of Nursia was a Christian saint who founded twelve communities of monks in Italy during the first half of the sixth century.

His main achievement was the creation of his *Rule for Monks*, to help his community translate their faith into the habits and rhythms of their shared daily life. His famous rule has inspired many communities and individuals to develop their own rules with a similar intention.

Thousands of nuns and monks, and at least as many laypeople, are still *Benedictine* -- they live each day guided by The Rule of St. Benedict.

Benedict's Rule contains 73 chapters, covering everything from helping out in the kitchen, to how and when to pray! The Rule was not meant to show a perfect way of living. Instead, it was meant as a means toward godliness, and as a guide for beginners in the spiritual life.



## EVERYTHING BECOMES SACRED

Benedict's Rule creates a pattern for living that is rooted in the vows taken by monks in the community. When Benedictines live by the Rule, *everything ordinary becomes sacred*. Every time and place becomes holy. Every day has direction and purpose.

Individuals attend to their own health and wholeness, while remaining awake to the needs of others.

Communities are energized by common purpose. The rule is not constricting, it is *freeing*.

A rule of life is not a to-do list which leads to busyness and highlights shortcomings.

A rule of life puts all in order, freeing us not **to do**, but to **become**.



# IDENTIFY

Spend a few moments looking over these questions.  
Circle or write in your answer.

1. What season of life am I in?
2. Am I generally introverted, or extroverted?
3. Do I, or a family member, have health issues? If so, what are they?
4. Where and how do I give back in my community? Financial Donations, Volunteering, Physical Donations, In-Kind Work, Other:
5. What kind of home atmosphere do I crave? Warm, Calm, Boisterous, Silly, Active, Encouraging, Studious, Friendly, Other:
6. For me, being a good steward of my finances means: Following a Budget, Giving, Tracking Spending, Saving, Downsizing, Conserving, Other:
7. The ways I work to connect with and care for my community are: Going to local schools, Joining neighborhood groups / clubs, Attending a neighborhood church, Supporting local small businesses, Volunteering, Other:
8. What am I good at? Where does my strength lie? Caring for others, Entertaining, Organization, Gift-giving, Athletics, Artistic endeavors, Business, Communication, Listening, Other:
9. How am I taking care of my body? Eating right, exercising, stretching, regular medical care, other:
10. How do I take care of my soul? Regular worship, prayer, meditation, silence, bible reading
11. What areas of my life receive more of my time than I feel they should?
12. What areas of my life receive less of my time than I feel they should?

# A RULE OF LIFE FOR HERE AND NOW

During Lent, individuals and families are encouraged to write their own Rule of Life, guided by the three Benedictine vows:





## STEADFASTNESS

I am called to be faithful to this place and these people.

*Stabilitas: Do not walk away from that you have committed yourself to,  
and which makes an appeal to you here and now.*

THESE ARE MY PLACES  
(HOME, WORK, SCHOOL, CHURCH, ETC.)

THESE ARE MY PEOPLE  
(FAMILY, FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS, CHURCH MEMBERS, COWORKERS, PEERS,  
MEMBERS OF ORGANIZATIONS I PARTICIPATE IN.)



## TRANSFORMATION

I will participate in being changed by God on a daily basis,  
in this place, and supported by these people.

*Conversatio Morum: The process of making small, realizable changes  
to improve attitude and lifestyle.*

IN MY LIFE, WHERE ARE SMALL CHANGES NECESSARY?

IN MY LIFE, I HAVE NEGLECTED TO TAKE POSITIVE STEPS IN THESE AREAS, WHICH ARE IMPORTANT TO ME:

I AM INSPIRED BY THESE SMALL CHANGES IN OTHERS:





## LISTENING

I am willing to be stretched in my understanding of God, and others.

*Obedientia: The art of careful listening and responding from the heart, actively.*

IN MY LIFE, WHERE MIGHT I LISTEN FOR MEANING?

IN MY LIFE, THESE VOICES ARE MOST IMPORTANT:

TO WHOM AM I NOT LISTENING WITH MY WHOLE HEART?

WHERE MUST I WATCH OUT FOR GRUMBLING?



## PRACTICES

Wednesday evenings for the remainder of Lent, children and adults will gather to explore these aspects of our lives. These sessions will help each of us as we create our own Rules of Life.

Children (1st grade and up) will meet in PC 211-213. Adults will meet in PC 111-113. Both sessions will run 7-8 pm. Nursery care is available.

### SABBATH

VALUING REST, BEING PRESENT, ENJOYING WHAT IS GOOD

### PRAYER

CREATING SPACE ON A DAILY BASIS FOR CONVERSATION WITH GOD

### STUDY

LEARNING FROM SCRIPTURE, BOOKS, TRADITION, AND THE SHARED WISDOM  
OF THE COMMUNITY TO GROW IN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF GOD.

### GENEROSITY

HOLDING LIGHTLY TO POWER, MONEY, AND THINGS;  
ADOPTING AN ATTITUDE OF ABUNDANCE RATHER THAN SCARCITY.



## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Based on the answers on your "Identify" sheet,  
which spiritual disciplines would you like to explore?  
Explore these during Lent on Wednesday evenings, or on your own.

### Steadfastness

Stewardship of goods and space / Presence / Worship

Gratitude / Stillness / Contentment

Other:

### Transformation

Service / Manual Labor / Simplicity

Gathering / Patience / Forgiveness / Fellowship

Other:

### Listening

Fasting / Personal Prayer / Daily Office / Study / Solitude

Silence / Obedience / Humility

Other:



## PRACTICES

Which practices would you like to include in your Rule?  
Explore these during Lent on Wednesday evenings, or on your own.  
Create your Rule slowly and thoughtfully. Make adjustments as  
needed. Review thoroughly (and with support) each Lent.

### Sabbath

Celebration / Rest/ Unplugging/ Savoring / Meditation  
Undivided attention / Play / Laughter / Recreation / Creativity

### Prayer

Dedicated time and place / Individual prayer / Family prayer /  
Meal blessing / Intercessory prayer / Worship / Centering Prayer / Examen

### Study

Formation in community (holy conversation)/ Reading /  
Podcasts or audiobooks / Lectio Divina / Daily devotionals

### Generosity

Paring down belongings / Purchase restraint / Living simply  
Reducing waste / Volunteering / Financial gifts  
Creation care and stewardship / Advocacy



## SAMPLE RULE OF LIFE

### Daily Sabbath:

Laptop off by 5:30pm

Facebook limit to one hour per day (Track on "Moment" app)

### Weekly Sabbath:

At least one fun thing each weekend chosen by the kids

No work on Saturdays

### Daily Prayer:

7:45 am - Walk dogs, listen to Pray-As -You-Go

Noon - Two minutes of silence

10:00 pm - Family prayer

### Weekly Prayer:

Attend worship every week.

### Weekly Study:

Attend or lead formation every Sunday

### Generosity:

No more straws or plastic bags (creation care)

No multitasking during conversations

At least one service activity each month (Grab a bag, BEAM,  
neighborhood clean-up, volunteer at church)

etc.



## MY RULE OF LIFE - SABBATH

Daily Sabbath:

Weekly Sabbath:

Quarterly Sabbath:



## MY RULE OF LIFE - PRAYER

Daily prayer:

Weekly prayer:



## MY RULE OF LIFE - STUDY

Daily study:

Weekly study:





## MY RULE OF LIFE - GENEROSITY

Daily generosity:

Weekly generosity:

Quarterly generosity:

Annual generosity:



## SOURCES AND RESOURCES

At Home in the World: A Rule of Life for the Rest of Us  
by Margaret Guenther

The Rule of Benedict for Beginners: Spirituality for Daily Life  
by Wil Derkse

Practices of Love: Spiritual Disciplines for the Life of the World  
by Kyle Dvid Bennett

Sabbath in the Suburbs: A Family's Experiment with Holy Time  
by MaryAnn McKibben Dana

Jerusalem Jackson Greer

<https://jerusalemgreer.com/2017/05/02/a-rule-of-life-the-spiritual-practice-of-being-present/>

Sacred Ordinary Days

<https://sacredordinarydays.com/pages/rule-of-life>

Pray as You Go (Daily audio Lectio Divina and Examen)

<https://www.pray-as-you-go.org/home/>