

The Way of Love

An Invitation from the Presiding Bishop

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/explore-way-love>

Rule of Life

(adapted from Episcopal Church resources)

- ▶ The idea of a “rule of life” comes from the Latin word *regula* and suggests a way to regulate or regularize our lives to stay on an intentional path. A rule of life is not just a set of rules to live by; rather, it is a gentle framework to guide and support us on our way.
- ▶ A rule of life allows us to live with intention and purpose in the present moment. It helps us clarify our most important values, relationships, dreams, and work.
- ▶ A rule of life is meant to be simple, realistic, flexible, and achievable. It is a purposeful tool to help us grow into a more meaningful life with God.

Discussion Questions

(adapted from Episcopal Church resources)

- ▶ What are some rules of life that already exist in our own lives, consciously or unconsciously? Are they helpful, or hurtful?
- ▶ Where is God calling you to pay more attention in your life? In what specific ways would you like to be more intentional with God?
- ▶ Monastics have been using rules of life for centuries. What do you think is key to the rule of life's staying power? What is appealing? What is daunting?
- ▶ What is holding you back from being more intentional about your relationship with God? What can you do to take down one of those barriers?

TURN (adapted from Episcopal Church resources)

Pause, listen and choose to follow Jesus

- ▶ Like the disciples, we are called by Jesus to follow the Way of Love. With God's help, we can turn from the powers of sin, hatred, fear, injustice, and oppression toward the way of truth, love, hope, justice, and freedom. In turning, we reorient our lives to Jesus Christ, falling in love with Jesus again, again, and again.
- ▶ Scripture is full of people, from Moses to Matthew, who turn from their old life to a new life in deeper relationship with God. What biblical stories speak to you? How has God called you out of an old life and into the new?

LEARN (adapted from Episcopal Church resources)

Reflect on Scripture each day, especially on Jesus' life and teachings.

- ▶ By reading and reflecting on Scripture, especially the life and teachings of Jesus, we draw near to God and God's word dwells in us. When we open our minds and hearts to Scripture, we learn to see God's story and God's activity in everyday life.
- ▶ How does hearing the stories of God working in the world in Scripture help you spot God working in the world today?
- ▶ What ways of reflecting on Scripture are the most life-giving for you?

PRAY

(adapted from Episcopal Church resources)

Dwell intentionally with God daily

- ▶ Jesus teaches us to come before God with humble hearts, boldly offering our thanksgivings and concerns to God or simply listening for God's voice in our lives and in the world. Whether in thought, word, or deed, individually or corporately, when we pray we invite and dwell in God's loving presence.
- ▶ Kathy Staudt, a spiritual director and seminary professor likes to say, "Five minutes of silence a day is the spiritual equivalent of flossing your teeth." How can you foster silence and receptivity to God in your own life?

WORSHIP (adapted from Episcopal Church resources)

Gather in community weekly to thank, praise, and dwell with God

- ▶ When we worship, we gather with others before God. We hear the Good News of Jesus, give thanks, confess, and offer the brokenness of the world to God. As we break bread, our eyes are opened to the presence of Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are made one body, the body of Christ sent forth to live the Way of Love.
- ▶ What communal worship practices move you to encounter God and knit you into the body of Christ?
- ▶ What is your favorite way to worship God outside of Church?

BLESS (adapted from Episcopal Church resources)

Share faith and unselfishly give and serve

- ▶ Jesus called his disciples to give, forgive, teach, and heal in his name. We are empowered by the Spirit to bless everyone we meet, practicing generosity and compassion and proclaiming the Good News of God in Christ with hopeful words and selfless actions. We can share our stories of blessing and invite others to the Way of Love.
- ▶ God gives us gifts so that we can share them. What are your spiritual gifts? What are the ways you share them with your community of faith and your community at large? (1 Cor 12) What else have you been gifted?
- ▶ What are the barriers that keep you from sharing your faith with others?

GO (adapted from Episcopal Church resources)

Cross boundaries, listen deeply and live like Jesus

- ▶ As Jesus went to the highways and byways, he sends us beyond our circles and comfort to witness to the love, justice, and truth of God with our lips and with our lives. We go to listen with humility and to join God in healing a hurting world. We go to become Beloved Community, a people reconciled in love with God and one another.
- ▶ Name a time you experienced reconciliation. What had to happen before the reconciliation could occur? How did that reconciliation change your relationship with others or God?
- ▶ Where does reconciliation need to happen in your community? How would reconciliation change your community?

REST

Preparation activity

- ▶ Write your name on one side of your card.
- ▶ Write your answer to the following prompt on the other side.

Describe an experience you had that was truly restful, leaving you feeling refreshed and rejuvenated. Recall at least three things you did or ways you received support that made that happen.

REST

Focus Activity

- ▶ Sit against the back of your chair
- ▶ Place your feet flat on the floor and hands on top of your thighs
- ▶ Close your eyes
- ▶ Together we are going to take 10 deep breaths, in through the nose and out through the mouth.

REST

Introduction

“It takes courage to say yes to rest and play in a culture where exhaustion is seen as a status symbol.”

Brené Brown, PhD

“It takes intentional role modeling from leaders to shape a culture that values self-care and restoration.”

Ken Blanchard, EdD

REST

Goals for our time together

- ▶ *Understanding what rest, retreat and restoration looks like in your life.*
- ▶ *Identify resources for you, your team and your congregation*
- ▶ *Support communicating the value of rest, retreat and restoration for yourself and your teams to decision makers and supporters.*

REST

Partner Share

- ▶ *Retrieve your 3x5 card completed at prior to lunch*
- ▶ *Find a partner*
- ▶ *Take two minutes each to share your writing*
- ▶ Two or three people will be asked to share with the group.

REST

Etymology/Nerdy Vocab

- ▶ **Rest:** from Latin word *restare*, stand back, to stay, to stop moving, to root down, to be still.
- ▶ **Retreat:** from Latin word - *re* (back) *trahere* (draw) - to draw in, draw back, leave the extremities, to surrender.
- ▶ **Restoration:** French root, healing or restoring health, to give back, to bring life, to build, to show honor.
- ▶ **Sabbath:** related to the word shabat, meaning to cease or rest.
- ▶ **Menuha:** Is the Hebrew word for rest, but it is better translated as joyous repose, tranquility, or delight.

Rob Bell - Robcast episode 204, Menuha!

REST

Purpose of rest

**Self-Care
Reflection
Centering
Wholeness
Productivity
Connection to self
Relationships with others
Belonging
Increased Empathy
Abundance Mindset**

Brown, Bonilla and Witmer (2017)

REST Asset Mapping

SPLIT INTO LEADERSHIP ROLE GROUPS

Using a large piece of paper and markers create an asset map, starting with your role at the middle (See diagram to understand mapping)

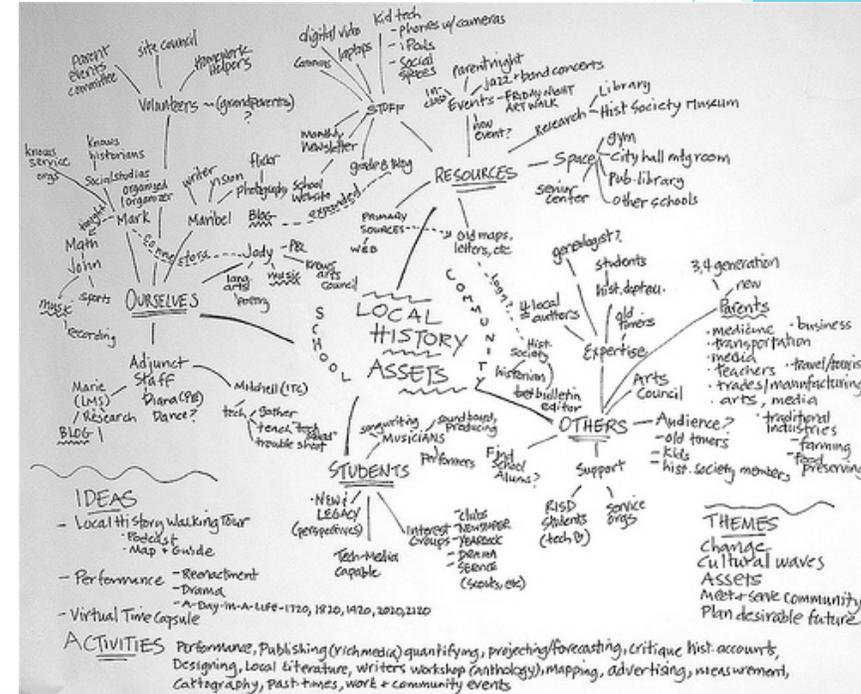
Take 10 mins to brainstorm and layout your “restoration asset map”.

Consider these questions:

What assets are available to you to support self-care, rest, retreat and restoration for you, your team and your church?

How are these assets connected to you and others in the community?

Be prepared to share a summary of your work!



REST

Reflection and Closure

Take five minutes to write in your journal

What will the practice of rest look like in your daily life?

What is one new thing you will do to create a culture that values rest, retreat and restoration?

How can you help make rest, retreat and restoration a priority in your church?

We will share as time permits

REST

“Self-care is never a selfish act - it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I was put on earth to offer others. Anytime we can listen to true self and give the care it requires, we do it not only for ourselves but for the many others whose lives we touch.”

Parker J. Palmer

Practices for Lent

Life Transformed: The Way of Love in Lent

50-Day Eastertide “Test Kitchen”