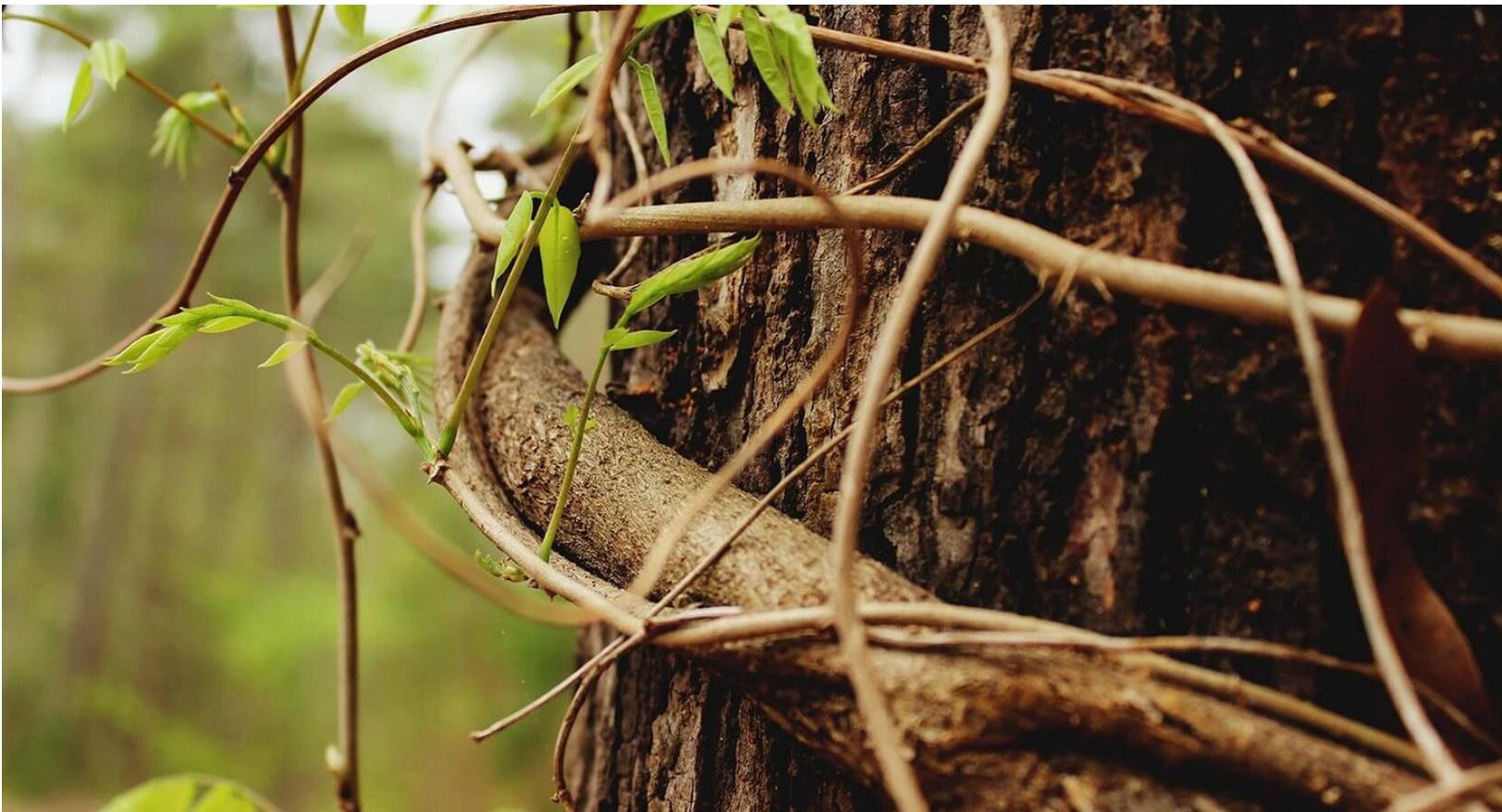




RULE OF LIFE

A Quick Guide to Small Groups





Summary

Here are 10 daily rhythms to help you structure your time and build long-term habits that may assist you in your spiritual growth.



Two Minute Read



Small Group Commitment #1 *Spiritual Growth*



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After my first week of working remotely, I woke up with a situation most of us have never faced before—I couldn't physically go to church. Since I had time, and had no clue what to do with myself, I saw this as a new opportunity to check out other churches and learn from other pastors across the country. In doing so, I discovered something called the *Rule of Life* as a template for navigating daily rhythms during this time of quarantine. As a result, I've been deeply impacted in my faith and challenged to live a more simplistic manner of life. Here's what I'm learning:

A rule of life is a set of practices and rhythms that create space for abiding in God and allow us to live in alignment with our deepest desires.

This is the first time in our western lives where instead of being money rich, but time poor, we have been placed on an involuntary sabbatical where time is the resource we have most on our hands. And like other things in our lives, this is an opportunity to give back to God what we have received while further growing as disciples of Jesus.

As a rule of life, this is not meant to be a legalistic checklist, but instead, an opportunity to build habits that may assist with growth in a wise manner. In times of chaos, these simple rhythms can assist in your spiritual growth by giving you structure in the same way that a trellis can guide a vine in growth within a branch or tree.

Since taking on the 10 Rules of Life, I've seen God working in my life.

Though it is new to all of our lives, this pandemic is not new to God or the history of the church. During these times, let's be awakened to what's important and rethink the daily rhythms of our lives for the glory of God.

Start the day in quiet prayer and meditation. Start the day in quiet prayer and Scripture reading before anything digital, like Instagram, or the news or television. If you have kids, ideally this will be before they wake up.

Create a gratitude ritual. Draw your attention to the things for which you are grateful. Perhaps you write them down each morning and talk about them with your family around the dinner table in the evening, or friends via text, FaceTime or Zoom.

Exercise or go for a walk. If at all possible, while maintaining proper social distancing, exercise or go for a walk. As physical creatures, there is something special about engaging your body that helps you stay grounded with God.

Choose one "focal practice". Find an activity that you are able to give your complete focus to without getting distracted or finding yourself concerned about the conditions of the outside world. This can be gardening, woodworking, cooking, reading, art, chess, etc.

Establish a relational touch point. Establish a relational touch point with a close friend, family member or someone in your small group. This is a time to draw closer in relationships through technology, not grow more distant.

Limit intake of news. The news cycle moves at a rapid pace, but our internal tempo isn't meant to live at that speed. Limit your intake to two times daily. Consider setting an alarm for once in the morning and once in the evening.

Limit screen time and escapist behaviors. It will be very easy to indulge in escapist behaviors. Find ways to limit your intake of things like social media, television, sugar, staying up late, etc.

Fasting and prayer one day a week. We want to see God heal people in our city and restore the world around us. Pick a day to fast and pray through breakfast and lunch.

Online community during the week. Continue to connect with your small group on a regular basis. Make a commitment to be there and be ready to care for one another. Choose a digital platform that works for everyone.

Sabbath and online worship. Keep your routine to practice Sabbath, or start one for the first time. Gather online every Sunday as we worship together, learn from the Scriptures and create space for the Spirit to work.