

SHELTER IN PLACE RULE OF LIFE
Faith Presbyterian Church of Sacramento

*Take heed, and keep your soul diligently,
lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen,
and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life.*

-Deuteronomy 4:9

What is a Rule of Life? The Rule of Life has a rich history in Christian tradition. The first Rule can be traced back to the early monastic movement in the 4th century. The most well-known Rule was written by Benedict in the 6th century and has influenced countless Christians ever since. A Rule of Life is not a set of rules – who needs more rules! Instead a Rule is a list of Spirit-empowered rhythms and practices adopted by an individual, a household, or a community that help create, redeem, sustain and transform our lives to better reflect the Kingdom of God in our midst. In a way, everybody has a Rule of Life. The problem is that many of us have let the culture around us determine our Rule, rather than intentionally setting rhythms and practices that help us abide with God and grow as followers of Jesus.

During this unique time of shelter in place we are inviting you to join others at Faith in a congregational Rule of Life. Again, the following are not rules. They are invitational and voluntary. Many of them are likely already a part of your weekly rhythm. Feel free to choose some and set aside others, or even add a few of your own to the list. There is, however, something heartening about knowing that you are engaging in these rhythms and practices with a larger community.

1. *Take at least 1% of your day (15 minutes), preferable first thing in the morning, for quiet prayer and scripture.*
Join us in reading a chapter of scripture and a Psalm each day. Listen first to God in his Word. Reflect. Journal. Question. Respond in prayer. Pray the Psalm if you like. Sit in quiet. Try to start the day with this practice, especially before you touch anything electronic or the newspaper. “The first hour of the morning is the rudder of the day.” (Henry Ward Beecher)
2. *Exercise or go for a walk each day.*
While maintaining social distancing, find some way each day to move your body in healthy ways. It’s good for your soul.
3. *Engage in an activity that delights.*
Find an activity that brings you delight. Gardening, woodworking, cooking, reading, art, chess, making music, etc. Several times each week allow yourself to give your complete and guilt-free focus to this activity. Engage with a heart of gratitude.
4. *Focus on the most vulnerable.*
In times of crisis it is easy to turn our focus inward. Instead, allow God to direct you to one person, organization or community which is especially vulnerable during this COVID-19 crisis:
 - Somebody you know personally who has been negatively impacted (e.g. sickness, loss of job/income)
 - An organization that is in need of support during this time (e.g. food banks, homeless shelters, World Vision, any of our church partnerships, etc.)
 - Communities in our world that are particularly vulnerable (e.g. our partnerships in Ethiopia or Kenya)Pray for these people or ministries. Donate or volunteer as you are able. Write notes of encouragement.
5. *Limit intake of news.*
The news cycle moves at a rapid pace, but our internal tempo is not meant to live at that speed. It also tends to focus on the negative. Limit your intake to two times daily. Consider setting an alarm for once in the morning and once in the evening.
6. *Commit to Life Group gatherings for times of fellowship, prayer and reflection on God’s Word.*
If you’re in a group, make this on-line weekly gathering a priority. If you’re not in a group but would like to join one, contact Pastor Jeff Chapman. Perhaps you have another small group you have joined...wonderful!
7. *Sabbath and online worship.*
Set aside one day each week to stop and rest. Sabbath is a gift. As a part of Sabbath, gather with us online Sunday mornings to worship.