

The truth is we have a responsibility for how we develop our relationship with God. There are times when we feel closer to God than others; and maybe for you, there are times when you feel like you can take on the world – with God. But if you're like me, those highs can quickly become deep lows and it feels like God isn't there. Rhythms of Life is a tool to help you reflect on and develop your relationship with God, as you respond to the truth of God's great love for you. It helps you share in His mission for the world around you.

I used to love taking the teenagers I worked with to Soul Survivor. I saw them worshipping, talking, sharing and living with each other - and with God - in a way not seen at any other time of the year. Now, don't get me wrong, there were many moments in youth sessions and weekly patterns, when I would see and experience God at work, but it was at these

youth camps and ministry times when I saw it in all its fullness. And it was beautiful.

But a few weeks later I would also experience the near depression that would consume these amazing young people that I loved – and I was helpless to stop it.

This highlighted to me, as a youth minister, the importance of daily rhythms in our relationship with God. Rhythms that bring about that love and joy into our everyday lives, allowing us to be constantly connected and aware of the awesomeness of God, and of His desire to use us and engage with us in everything we do.

So... if we want to be His disciples; if we want to deepen our love for Jesus; we need to know that we are loved by God. We need to know in our innermost being that God calls us his Sons and Daughters. You see, it's from that place of knowing, that we are inspired to take time to deepen our relationship with Him. So stop - and know that He loves you; that he calls you His child; and that He has a purpose for your life. And as we develop these rhythms we will see His purpose lived out every day.

Diocesan Youth Adviser

So what are your current rhythms?

How much of your time do you give to God? I want you to be as honest as you can about how you spend time deepening your relationship with God. What are the practical things that you do:

Daily?

Weekly?

Monthly?

Seasonally?

Annually?

WAY?

For the next year I want us all to learn more about how to walk and work with Jesus in His rhythms of grace. I want us to deepen our intimacy and love for Jesus, knowing that resting and being with Him, as he rested and was with His Father, is the source of living your life to the full.

I want us to plan 3 Rhythms of Life. Each of these rhythms are focused on **time**, which is God's precious gift to us. The time we use practising these 3 rhythms does lead to us doing things, but in no way are they to be burdensome. They are meant to be expressions of love that we experience from our intimacy with God which then overflow into our daily lives.

TRUTH?

In the bible, it says His yoke is easy and His burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30). The very first prophetic word I ever received from God was that He wanted to encourage me to relax. Our rhythms of life are not meant to be things which stress us out, or make us feel bad if we don't do them. The vision is to not try too hard, but to see how we can take moments (time) in our day when we can just stop and realise that we are loved by God. From that place of knowing that we are loved, we are called to love others and the world around us.

LIFE?

There is no formula for a relationship with God, I can't honestly tell you that if you read your bible every day, go to youth group every week and do everything you are asked to do, that you will have a great relationship with God. Those rhythms are great and are needed as we deepen our relationship with God, but they can also put pressure on us. We can do those things because we think we have to, rather than because we want to, and then it can become hard work, tiresome and dull. They can become more of a tick box exercise rather than a relational tool; life-draining rather than life-giving.

But if we do something because we love it, then that is amazing. Like when you're training for a race you really want to do. You are excited about the race and really get a buzz out of competing. You can't just step up to the start line and expect to win without training. You need to prepare yourself and get into peak condition. That's when disciplines are good for you! So... do you love Jesus enough to pursue Him?

Jesus' way is easier, lighter, happier, and better. I want us to learn more how not to resist the Spirit of Grace, and instead to submit ourselves to Jesus' easy yoke. If we accomplish less outwardly it's okay. In fact, it's probably better because it helps us to be **more relational and loving** towards God and others, which, of course, is the only thing that really matters!

So how can we deepen our love for God in a way that brings life to us and to those around us?

WHAT NOW?

Below I have highlighted 3 areas which will be the focus of creating a better rhythm of life. I want you to think about the practical ways you:

1. Love God; love and care for yourself; and love others.
2. Do church, friendships and family. What are your routines, traditions and experiences?
3. Serve those around you; do random acts of kindness; work with charities; and care for the environment.

This isn't a competition, but a reflection on where you are in how you express your relationship with God. We all do so much more than we think we do, and we have the capacity to do even more, if they are things we naturally love to do such as running.

As we explore these things I hope they will enable us to:

1. Deepen our love for Jesus and cause us to care about the things He cares about;
2. Help us to focus on how we spend our time in these areas;
3. Challenge us to think about how we can create natural rhythms in our day, where we can engage with God and get involved in what He is doing in our world.

LOVING

- **Loving God –**

Taking time to develop my relationship with God

How am I doing this already?

What can I commit to this year?

- **Loving Others –**

Taking time to develop our relationship with family & friends

How am I doing this already?

What can I commit to this year?

- **Loving Myself –**

Taking time to see myself as a child of God and remind myself of that every day. 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made!'

How am I doing this already?

What can I commit to this year?

LIVING

- **Living in the bible –**

Taking time with God in the bible. We are transformed by the renewing of our minds. If we want to fall in love with Jesus, and live life to the full, we need to know the bible. Not just the words on the pages but the truth hidden in them.

How am I doing this already?

What can I commit to this year?

- **Living an adventurous life –**

Taking time to explore new ways of everything - church, friendship, family.

How am I doing this already?

What can I commit to this year?

- **Living a relational life –**

Taking time to allow our love for God to inform our relationships and how we share with each other.

How am I doing this already?

What can I commit to this year?

SERVING

- **Serving the world God has given us –**

Taking time to care about the environment and the world around us.

How am I doing this already?

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What can I commit to this year?
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- **Local and wider community –**

Taking time to act against injustice – locally, nationally and internationally.

How am I doing this already?

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What can I commit to this year?
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- **Serving our home, families and friends –**

Taking time to give to those we live with. Time to laugh, cry, share, pray and eat food!

How am I doing this already?

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What can I commit to this year?
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SO WHAT'S OUR PLAN?

If you have thought of a few things you can take time to do, then you can write them down as a commitment to how you want to deepen your relationship with God. These are challenges that we want you to reflect on regularly with your youth group, mentor or families.

What will you commit to?

Loving I will... ..
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Living I will... ..
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Serving I will... ..
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Who will be in your prayer and accountability group?

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How often will you meet up?
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SHARING **GOD'S** LIFE



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LIVING THE LIFE
JESUS
PLANNED FOR YOU



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