

Ecology of Soul: Some Dimensions and Patterns for a Rule of Life

- ❖ Think of a rule of life as a path you have chosen for your soul's health
- ❖ Any rule of life should be *practical, moderate, as short as possible, and flexible*
- ❖ Any rule of life can include: work, recreation, rest, personal growth, study prayer, relationships, and creative expression.
- ❖ A rule of life should support *balanced living* (body, mind, and spirit)

Balance assumes: priorities

Priorities require desire and persistence

Desire and persistence are given form and vitality through a rule of life

Can we be wise and fruitful at the same time?

Our purpose is not perfection or spiritual advancement.

Our purpose is single-minded faithfulness to our relationships with God and our neighbor.

We need constant formation in prayer for a life on the move!

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It is possible to view work simply as a way to make a living. A rule of life helps us set our work (and the rest of life) in a sacred context that makes "living" our primary vocation, not our work. In the Christian tradition there have always been three treasures that form and maintain this sacred context: *personal prayer (meditation and contemplation), study of and meditation on sacred scripture (primarily the Bible), and participation in the Eucharist.*

Spiritual formation is the process of becoming a person whose outward living manifests a transformative experience of God within. A contemplative heart is a heart that has room for God and our neighbor and has a passionate desire to love both God and our neighbor as ourselves.

Some possibilities:

Jesus of Nazareth:

...quiet listening
...faithful discernment
...compassionate response

The Rule of Benedict

...work, study, prayer
...rest, recreation
...daily conversion
...obedience (for the good of all)
(All these are lived in the context of community with listening to and accepting personal limits for the good of all.)

St. Macarius Contemplative Community

...to be a person of prayer (personal experience of and intimacy with God)
...to be committed to growth and transformation
...to be compassionate in actions, relationships, and use of the earth
...to be a faithful and active member of St. Macarius Contemplative Community
...to participate in a weekly Eucharist at a local Episcopal congregation or weekly worship in another faith tradition if the person is not Episcopalian