John 7:37-39

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." 39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

Spiritual Leadership Insights

What “soul thirsts” do you find within yourself at this point in your journey? What specific thirsts is Jesus inviting you to bring to Himself? Have any particular thirsts become more obvious to you in the course of this retreat?

What “soul thirsts” are you aware of among those in your network of influence? How might Jesus be desiring to use you to help them bring their thirsts to Him?
Developing a Personal “Rhythm of Life”

What is a rhythm or rule of life?

“A rule of life is a pattern of spiritual disciplines that provides structure and direction for growth in holiness. When we speak of patterns in our life, we mean attitudes, behaviors, or elements that are routine, repeated, regular. Indeed, the Latin term for ‘rule’ is *regula*, from which our words *regular* and *regulate* derive. A rule of life is not meant to be restrictive, although it certainly asks for genuine commitment. It is meant to help us establish a rhythm of daily living, a basic order within which new freedoms can grow. A rule of life, like a trellis, curbs our tendency to wander and supports our frail efforts to grow spiritually (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005, p. 146).”

Examples of a rhythm/rule of life

**William Wilberforce** (British leader who was a primary human force behind the abolition of the slave trade in the West).

“[at 53 years of age] *When not unavoidably prevented by company or House of Commons, to take an hour, or at least half an hour, for private devotions, including Scripture reading and meditation, immediately before family prayers…”*

“[at 63 years of age] *To-day I began the plan, to which by God’s grace I mean to adhere, of having my evening private devotions before family prayers. For what is this they have too often been sadly hurried, and the reading of Scriptures omitted. I have therefore resolved to allot an hour…”* (Pura, Murray Andrew. *Vital Christianity: The Life and Spirituality of William Wilberforce*. Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2003, p. 63)

“[Regarding Sabbath] *I am persuaded that to withdraw the mind one day in seven from its ordinary trains of thought and passion, and to occupy it in contemplating subjects of a higher order, which by their magnitude make worldly interests shrink into littleness, has the happiest effect on the intellectual and moral system.* (Pura, p. 60-61)

**Mother Teresa** (and for the order she founded, the Missionaries of Charity).

- Free will confession (not obligatory)
- Daily 30 minutes of meditation.
- Twice daily examen of conscience.
- Daily 30 minutes spiritual reading
- In regards to personal retreat: 1 day per week, one week per month, one month per year, on year per six back at the motherhouse “where in contemplation and penance together with solitude she can gather in the spiritual strength, which she might have used up in the service of the poor.” (Mother Teresa. *Come Be My Light*. New York: Doubleday, 2007, p. 343).
Martin Luther King, Jr.
• Meditate daily on the teachings and life of Jesus.
• Remember always that the nonviolent movement in Birmingham seeks justice and reconciliation, not victory.
• Walk and talk in the manner of love, for God is love.
• Pray daily to be used by God in order that all might be free.
• Observe with both friend and foe the ordinary rules of courtesy.
• Seek to perform regular service for others and the world.
• Refrain from violence of fist, tongue, or heart.
• Strive to be in good spiritual and bodily health.
• Follow the directions of the movement and the captain of a demonstration. (Thompson, p. 140).

Rhythm of Grace Community (http://www.rhythmofgrace.org/)
• Daily morning communal prayer
• Weekly Sunday evening communal prayer of examen.
• Monthly Friday “Intimate Evening with Jesus”
• Quarterly Weekend Retreats

Getting Started

1. What rhythms of life have you already been seeking to practice in your daily, weekly, monthly, annual patterns?

2. Remember that spiritual disciplines or practices are not tasks we do, but space to cultivate and enjoy the relationship with the Father we have through the Son by the Spirit. Henri Nouwen says that through spiritual disciplines we prevent the world from filling our lives to such an extent that there is no place left to listen [to Him].

3. Start simply and small. Don’t try to do too much at once. Allow your rule/rhythm of life to develop over time.

4. See the catalog of spiritual disciplines/practices below not as a list of the bad news of all that I am not doing in my spiritual life, but rather see them as many various ways the Spirit might nudge you toward a deeper experience of His life in and through you.

5. Let this be a Spirit-initiated and Spirit-guided process. Allow the Spirit shape the disciplines and rhythms of your unique rhythm of life. Trust that living the rhythms of this rule will be empowered by the Spirit. Allow focus to remain on the work of the Spirit, not on the work of the discipline.
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Classical Spiritual Disciplines

Foster’s Categories from Celebration of Discipline

Willard’s Categories from Spirit of the Disciplines

Peterson’s Categories from Under the Unpredictable Plant

Inward Disciplines

Meditation – “the ability to hear God’s voice” (1988:17)

Disciplines of Abstinence

Solitude
Silence
Fasting
Frugality—“frees us from a multitude of desires” (1988:169)

Chastity—total focus on God.

Secrecy—“ceasing to make one’s good deeds and qualities known” (1988:72)

Sacrifice—abstain from “what is necessary” (1988:174)

Watching—“abstaining from sleep in order to attend to prayer” (1988:51)

Stewardship

Outward Disciplines

Simplicity—“joyful unconcern about possessions...in order to seek His kingdom first” (1988:86-87)

Solitude
Submission
Service—“many little deaths of going beyond ourselves in care for others.” (1988:126)

Corporate Disciplines

Confession
Worship
Guidance
Celebration

Disciplines of Engagement

Study—particularly of the Word
Worship—ascribing to God worth
Celebration
Service
Prayer
Fellowship
Confession
Submission

Disciplines Classified by Others

Spiritual Friends
Celibacy
Poverty
Feasting
Evangelism
Noticing God
(Peace 1998)

Nouwen’s Classifications

Communion (Solitude)
Community
Ministry

Chuck Miller’s Classifications

Abiding (Solitude)
Loving one another
Bearing Witness