

# A Rhythm of Life...



**for the people of  
St John's  
and  
St Luke's**

## FOUNDATION

**Jesus said, 'Walk with me and work with me - watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.'**

*(Matthew 11:29-30, Message version)*

At St John's and St Luke's we want to adopt a **Rhythm of Life** so that we can learn together those **'Unforced Rhythms of Grace'**, to help us **'live freely and lightly'**, walking in step with Jesus.

A Rhythm of Life (RoL) can be best described as a **framework** or **trellis** which helps us to grow by giving a spiritual structure to our everyday lives, and by offering support when things are difficult.

Living by a Rule or Rhythm of Life is nothing new. The monks of the Benedictine order lived by the Rule of St Benedict; early Celtic Christians such as Hilda and Aidan and their followers adopted the idea of living under a Rule. And in our time ROLs have been rediscovered as a great way to help people live as disciples—hence our diocese has developed ROL material, and the Scargill community also follow a 'Way of Life'.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

We are asking people to make 4 basic steps if they want to join our Rhythm of Life Community:

1. Take time to look at the material
2. Making one or more practical commitments in each area
3. Travel together—find a fellow traveller and come to termly community meetings
4. Review your commitments periodically

We are aiming to launch our Rhythm of Life in the early autumn. And want as many people as possible to join in (while recognising it will not be for everyone)

There will be two identical introductory meetings, lasting for about 45 minutes - the 1st is after church on **Sunday 1st October** and the 2nd is on **Wednesday 4th October** at 7.30pm—please try to come to one of them. There will also be some sermons in October and some small groups studies to kick things off, and people new to the church will be encouraged to join our ROL journey.

Thereafter, once a term (possibly more in the 1st year), we will hold a ROL Sunday where we will focus on encouraging us on our shared but distinct journeys, and also a midweek gathering where we will share tips and experiences to help us live out our ROL.

And in all of this, we will remember, as the song goes, 'The Rhythm of Life Is a wonderful thing!'

## APPLYING A RHYTHM OF LIFE (RoL) IN BILTON

Living by a RoL should over time

- Draw us closer to God and his transforming love for us - UP
- Pull us closer to each other as we journey together - IN
- Push us outwards in service in the world - OUT

Our RoL has 4 broad areas—**Transforming, Treasuring, Travelling** and **Rhythming** and for each of these areas there are some suggestions of commitments we can make; but the outworking of these commitments will vary because we are all different people at varying stages in our spiritual journeys.

So, for example, there is the commitment to regular prayer, but this does not mean we will all pray in the same way. Another is to unearth the unique God-given 'treasure' in each of us— but again, that treasure will vary the Holy Spirit gives different gifts to each of us.

We want to build up these commitments gradually - so initially people might only take up one or at most two commitments from each of the four areas, noting them down on the separate commitment leaflet.

## 1. TRANSFORMING

Jesus wants us as his disciples to grow in His likeness, to be 'changed from the inside out'. Examples of commitments to being transformed include:

- I will prioritise loving God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength and to love my neighbour as myself.
- I will approach prayer primarily as something relational (*time with*) rather than transactional (*asking for*), remembering that God delights in us and made us to know and love Him & enjoy being with Him; and I will try different models of prayer e.g. Lectio Divina, Centring Prayer & the Examen .
- I will read 'How to Pray by Peter Greig.
- I will daily ask the Holy Spirit, who lives in me and is my helper and guide, to help me live my life like Jesus would if He were living my life, and to show me where I need to repent, change or grow.
- I will, with the help of the Holy Spirit, seek inner transformation because this leads to freedom to be fully ourselves—for example,
  - I will try to be a more reflective person, being 'kindly curious' about my reactions in times of stress, asking what causes me to respond in unhelpful ways
  - I will try out tools such as the Enneagram - see <https://www.ianmorgancron.com/test> to help me see myself as God sees me
- I will search out ways of renewing my mind e.g. by learning the art of attentiveness—see [https://www.baptisttimes.co.uk/Articles/655829/Liberating\\_human\\_attention.aspx](https://www.baptisttimes.co.uk/Articles/655829/Liberating_human_attention.aspx)

## 4. RHYTHM-ING

The whole of creation lives by rhythms – day and night, work and rest, pruning and fallowness, growth and fruitfulness.

Therefore I will seek to live by rhythms that honour God and His Creation and which promote my well-being and that of others. Examples of commitments include:

- I will spend time apart with God on a daily basis e.g. by a regular pattern of Morning and Evening Prayer, or by using apps such as Lectio 365 or Time to Pray.
- I will, on the principle found the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment, honour my family and nurture my loving relationships. As part of this I will avoid overwork and I will limit meetings to two evenings per week
- I will make sufficient space for recreation and Sabbath rest ('Garden City' by John Mark Comer is a great book on this subject)
- I will daily choose to practice self-care e.g. by leaving gaps in my diary & by doing things that feed my soul and bring me joy.
- I will seek to keep in step with creation, for example, by buying sustainable products and keeping on reducing my carbon footprint, living a simple lifestyle and sharing generously what God has blessed me with
- I will take time on a regular basis to reflect on my physical, emotional and spiritual well-being

### 3. TRAVELLING TOGETHER

The Christian life is best lived out as a shared or supported journey. Thus a key part of our RoL is committing to find what we are calling a 'Fellow Traveller' for the journey to help and encourage us.

This fellow traveller (or soul friend) can be found by you (though we can help here), and will be a person who is probably a little bit further on in their journey of faith than we are. Their role will be to:

- meet with us 3 or 4 times a year
- listen to us
- ask us about how we are getting on in applying our RoL commitments in the 4 areas (without judging us!!) and help us explore our next steps in our journey with God,
- pray with us

Our fellow traveller might also :

- Suggest helpful books or podcasts
- encourage us to take times apart for space & reflection
- Encourage us to visit places of spiritual significance e.g. Ripon Cathedral or Holy Island, or maybe even make a pilgrimage e.g. by walking the St Cuthbert's Way <https://www.stcuthbertsway.info/> or one of the many Camino routes

The need for the RoL to be a shared experience can also be addressed by our seeking to deepen loving relationships with other Christians, especially at St John's and St Luke's by, for example:

- Joining a small group
- Looking out for/seeking to draw in those on the fringes and the vulnerable
- Laughing often and not taking offence

### 2. TREASURING

Ephesians 1:3 says that God has blessed us with '*every spiritual blessing in Christ*' – adopting a RoL can help us unearth these blessings or 'treasures' for ourselves and help others to do the same.

Suggestions of commitments to treasuring include:

- I will '**dig**' through the Scriptures on my own/with others, so as to get to know God more deeply, for He is the greatest treasure
- I will **treasure** that I am fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139); that I am God's masterpiece (Ephesians 2:10); and that He knows the number of hairs on my head
- I will choose to believe that I had God-given gifts and abilities and will take time to **unearth** them and use them.
- Following Jesus' example, I will regard **all people as treasure** of great worth and seek to **help them sparkle (see Luke 19:1-10)**. Thus, for example I will:
  - \* look for ways to encourage others in their journey of faith/ be willing to be encouraged by them
  - \* give people the gift of my time and my listening
  - \* seek to bless the people in my area e.g. via the Community Grocery or by supporting local businesses, or by praying for blessing on the places where I know drugs are being bought & sold & the people involved.
  - \* seek to combat injustice through my giving, my prayers and by supporting causes close to my heart
  - \* Be willing to talk about my faith and to learn to tell my faith story in wise and helpful ways