

# THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

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GARDEN CITY  
CHURCH

Prince George, British Columbia

Rule of Life – Garden City Church  
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[thegardencitychurch.ca](http://thegardencitychurch.ca)

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# BEFORE YOU BEGIN PLEASE COMPLETE THE SPIRITUAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT

The Spiritual Health Reflection from Practicing the Way is a self-assessment tool designed to help you gauge your inner life with God and the person you are becoming in Christ. It typically takes about 5 - 10 minutes to complete.

We suggest taking the Reflection in a quiet, distraction free place, when you have the time to work through it slowly. After you've finished the questions, you'll be provided with a visual overview of different aspects of your spiritual formation and suggestions for next steps.

The Reflection is designed as an ongoing tool to track the trajectory of your formation over time. Once you've completed more than one Reflection, the results will include visualized data to indicate movement in key areas of your apprenticeship. The aim is to better name Jesus' loving direction in your discipleship journey.

May the Spirit illuminate your mind and give your heart peace as you reflect on your life with God...



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# WHAT

is a rule of life?

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**“A Rule of Life is a set of principles and practices we build into the rhythm of our daily lives, helping us to deepen our relationship with God and to serve Him more faithfully. If Creeds are what we believe and Christ is why we believe, a Rule is how we seek to live out that faith, day to day as disciples in the power of the Holy Spirit.”**

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*PETE GREIG – THE VISION AND THE VOW*

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IMAGINE A COMMUNITY  
WHERE WE SLOW DOWN,  
CONNECT DEEPLY, AND  
LIVE DIFFERENTLY—  
TOGETHER.

**A rule of life is Garden City's  
invitation to embody a new  
rhythm of life, countering  
the pressures of our culture  
with practices rooted in  
Jesus' way.**

# WHY

a communal rule of life?

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In our fast-paced culture, it is easy for Christian life to become reactive rather than intentional. We gather as the church on Sunday, serve occasionally, and pray when we remember—but without a framework, our faith can become fragmented. A Rule of Life gives us a structure to live faithfully day by day.

A Rule of Life is a set of spiritual practices and rhythms that help us live intentionally in light of God's kingdom. It is not a legalistic checklist or a program of performance; rather, it is a guide to help us grow in intimacy with God, be transformed into the character of Jesus, and live missionally in the world.

At Garden City Church, our Rule of Life is rooted in the rhythms of Scripture and shaped by the life and teaching of Jesus. It is designed to help us cultivate practices that centre us on God, form our hearts and character, and equip us to live out the gospel in our homes, workplaces, neighbourhoods, and communities.

Our practices include: Prayer, Scripture, Sabbath, Community, Generosity, Hospitality, Peacemaking, Service, and Witness. Each practice fulfils our mission of “Growing Together for the Renewal of the City.” They draw us closer to God, shape us to be like Jesus, and send us to participate in the work of his kingdom in the world. In short, a Rule of Life is about living intentionally as God's people, in a way that reflects the gospel in every sphere of life.

Our goal is to move from:  
INFORMATION to  
INSPIRATION to  
FORMATION.

# HOW

will we use a rule of life?

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Our Rule of Life is organized around three spheres:

## GROWING

With God – Practices that cultivate intimacy with the Father, Son, and Spirit.

- Prayer: Communicating with God throughout the day and listening to his voice.
- Scripture: Reading and meditating on God's Word to renew our minds and shape our desires.
- Sabbath: Resting and delighting in God's presence to grow in trust and dependence.

## TOGETHER

With Each Other – Practices that cultivate Christlike character in community.

- Community: Building relationships that encourage accountability and spiritual growth.
- Generosity: Using our resources to bless others and advance God's kingdom.
- Hospitality: Opening our homes and hearts to others as a reflection of God's welcome.

## FOR RENEWAL

With Others – Practices that shape us for missional living.

- Peacemaking: Pursuing reconciliation and harmony in our relationships, communities, and city, reflecting God's shalom.
- Service: Engaging in acts of mercy, compassion, and practical help that reflect God's kingdom in tangible ways.
- Witness: Sharing the gospel through words, actions, and the testimony of our lives, inviting others to know Jesus.

Each practice is experienced in three ways:

- Be with Jesus – cultivating intimacy with God.
- Be like Jesus – allowing the Spirit to shape our character.
- Do what Jesus did – participating in God’s mission.

We will use this Rule of Life in both personal and communal ways:

- Personal: Each person is encouraged to reflect on and adopt practices that help them grow in faith and witness.
- Communal: Community groups and groups of friends or family can explore these practices together, sharing accountability, encouragement, and practical ideas for living out the gospel.

The goal is not perfection but formation. By committing to these practices, we are forming hearts that notice God at work, align with his purposes, and participate in the mission of his kingdom.

As you engage with each spiritual practice—take intentional steps to track your journey. Use the checkboxes provided to mark each practice you complete. Cross off verses read or memorized. This simple act of recording your progress helps you stay consistent and provides a visual reminder of your growth.

Take time to journal your reflections, noting what God reveals to you, where you faced challenges, and how you saw His work in your life and the lives of others. When questions or prompts ask you to reflect or write, don’t skip them—these moments of personal recording are where insight, transformation, and spiritual growth often take root.

IF THIS WORKBOOK IS COMPLETED  
GARDEN CITY CHURCH HAS A SPECIAL GIFT FOR  
YOU AS A REWARD FOR YOUR DISCIPLINE AND  
COMMITTMENT TO DISCIPLESHIP.

# A WORD

about the rule of life

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The Community Rule of Life is a curated montage of 9 practices formed around our mission statement: Growing Together for the Renewal of the City.

Its purpose is to be:

**THOROUGH:** It covers the majority of the Christian life.

**ESSENTIAL:** It covers many of the requisite and classic spiritual practices.

**ASPIRATIONAL:** We believe that if each of us oriented our lives around community rule of life, we would develop as followers of Jesus. While most of us could do all 9 practices and we would strongly suggest you move in that direction, we encourage each person to start where they are in their spiritual journey and use our Community Rule as a goal.

**SPECIFIC:** Each discipline is designed to be clear and ready to practice.

**A GUIDE:** While it does not assess whether you're a "good Christian", it can function to guide our practices and serve as a ruler for our spiritual lives. Our Community Rule of Life will also be used to guide new believers and baptismal candidates as they seek to follow Jesus.

**ESTABLISHED:** While we may make changes if needed, our Community Rule of Life will stay as-is for the foreseeable future.



# GROWING AS APPRENTICES OF JESUS

PRACTICES

PRAYER  
SCRIPTURE  
SABBATH





# PRAYER

**A commitment to dependence  
in a world of self-reliance.**



# PATTERN

The Lord's Prayer

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## WHAT TO KNOW

After seeing Jesus doing remarkable things – walk on water, heal the sick, cast out demons, turn water to wine – the curiosity of the disciples was focused on Jesus' prayer life. Something foundational and important surrounded Jesus' prayer life. So they simply asked this: "Lord, teach us to pray." Our goal is to follow their desire – to learn to pray like Jesus.

## WHERE TO READ

- Matthew 6:9-13
- Luke 11:2-4



## WHO TO HEAR

*"When Jesus gave his disciples this prayer, he was giving them part of his own breath, his own life, his own prayer. The prayer is actually a distillation of his own sense of vocation, his own understanding of his Father's purposes. If we are truly to enter into it and make it our own, it can only be if we first understand how he set about living the Kingdom himself." NT WRIGHT*

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Begin the habit of praying the Lord's prayer daily. After committed to memory begin to pray phrase by phrase and personalize the prayer.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Thank God for hearing you and now invite the Holy Spirit to awaken your heart to his work and ask how he wants you to respond to his prayer.

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

"Your kingdom come" is a missional prayer. Begin a list of prayer requests for God's kingdom and God's will to be done in your life.

☐ completed

# POSTURE

## Meditative Prayer

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### WHAT TO KNOW

Meditative prayer, especially praying Scripture, is a form of prayer where you slowly and thoughtfully reflect on a Bible passage. Instead of rushing through words, you meditate on their meaning, letting God's truth sink deeply into your heart and guide your conversation with Him. It's about listening, dwelling on God's promises, and responding with openness and trust.

### WHERE TO READ

- Psalm 1
- Joshua 1:8



### WHO TO HEAR

*“Christian meditation, very simply, is the ability to hear God’s voice and obey his word. It is that simple...it allows God’s Word to become a living reality in our hearts, shaping our character and decisions.”*

RICHARD FOSTER

### HOW TO PRACTICE

BE WITH JESUS	BECOME LIKE JESUS	DO WHAT JESUS DID
Quiet yourself in Psalm 1 and read it multiple times. Pause after each reading to quietly listen and let God’s Spirit speak to your heart.	After meditating on Scripture, write down what God is revealing about His character and yours. Note areas where you need growth.	Pray Psalm 1 over your life and the church. Pray that we would delight in God’s Word so that we would be fruitful (v.2-3).
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# PRESENCE

Comtemplative Prayer

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## WHAT TO KNOW

Contemplative prayer is silent enjoyment of God's loving presence. It's less about asking or talking and more about resting in God's presence, opening your heart to His love, and listening deeply. The contemplation journey has 3 stages: Meditation: "*Me and God*" Contemplation: "*God and me*" and Communion: "*only God.*"

## WHERE TO READ

- Psalm 19
- Matthew 6:6



## WHO TO HEAR

*"We tend to think of prayer as something we do in order to produce the results we believe are needed or, rather to get God to produce the results...As a result, our prayer tends to be a shopping list of things to be accomplished, an attempt to manipulate the symptoms of our lives without really entering into a deep, vital, transforming relationship with God."* M. ROBERT MULHOLLAND

## HOW TO PRACTICE

BE WITH JESUS	BECOME LIKE JESUS	DO WHAT JESUS DID
Quiet your mind and body. Say to God, "Here I am. I am with you." Be with God in loving attentiveness. The goal is presence not performance.	ASK; Do you feel that being in God's presence is not the same as prayer? What does God think of your wasting time with him? Ask Him.	Choose a prayer word (a character or action of God - love, grace, peace, Healer, etc.) Let this word draw you into the presence of God.
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# PURPOSE

Missional Prayer

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## WHAT TO KNOW

Missional Prayer comes from the conviction that God is a missionary God; therefore, we are a missionary people. It is prayer shaped by Jesus' concern for the lost, and directed toward asking God to open doors, send workers, and change hearts so the gospel can spread. In practice it mixes personal listening and confession with intercession for neighbourhoods, nations, and specific opportunities to witness.

## WHERE TO READ

- Luke 10:2
- Acts 1:8



## WHO TO HEAR

*“Prayer alone gives work its worth and its success.” – ANDREW MURRAY*

*“Asking is indeed the great law of the spiritual world through which things are accomplished in cooperation with God and yet in harmony with the freedom and worth of every individual” DALLAS WILLARD*

## HOW TO PRACTICE

BE WITH JESUS	BECOME LIKE JESUS	DO WHAT JESUS DID
Use a short, scripted breath-prayer: “Lord Jesus, make me ready – send me, shape me, open doors.” Repeat slowly for 5 minutes. Note one impression you receive and journal it.	Review the day for mission asking where you showed love, where you showed love, where you failed, and what God is asking you to grow in (compassion, courage, humility).	Go to a place and pray this pattern: Praise (what God is doing here), Petition (for specific people or needs), Proclaim (ask God to open doors to speak of Jesus).
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# PRACTICE REFLECTION

## **BE WITH JESUS**

How did this practice help you grow closer to God? What did you notice about His presence, guidance, or love?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **BECOME LIKE JESUS**

How did this practice shape your thoughts, attitudes, or actions to be more like Jesus? What challenges did you face?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **DO WHAT JESUS DID**

How did you live out this practice in your community, family, or workplace?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

# RECOMMENDED READING

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**Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home**

by Richard Foster

**Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God**

by Timothy Keller

**A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World**

by Paul E. Miller

**The Practice of the Presence of God**

by Brother Lawrence

**Praying Backwards: Transform Your Prayer Life by Beginning in  
Jesus' Name**

by Bryan Chapell

**Fervent**

by Priscilla Shirer

**Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools**

by Tyler Staton

**God on Mute**

by Pete Greig

**The Lord's Prayer**

by NT Wright





# SCRIPTURE

**A commitment to truth in a  
world of confusion.**

# READING

## How to Study Scripture

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### WHAT TO KNOW

How we study the Bible is hermeneutical: it requires understanding the literary, historical, and cultural context of the text to avoid distortion of meaning. However, it cannot remain purely intellectual. We study Scripture so that we might meet God and be transformed by Him. The goal of Bible study is not accumulation of information, but transformation into the likeness of Christ.

### WHERE TO READ

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- Psalm 119:105



### WHO TO HEAR

*“Without careful reading, Scripture becomes a mirror reflecting our preferences; with disciplined study, it becomes a lens reshaping our desires.” D.A. CARSON*

### HOW TO PRACTICE

BE WITH JESUS
Read Scripture alongside “Study Bible” notes or a Commentary. Watch a Bible Project video on the passage you are studying.

☐ completed

BECOME LIKE JESUS
Read a passage and create a list of questions of interest, doubt, or curiosity. Ask a mentor or search a commentary to discover answers.

☐ completed

DO WHAT JESUS DID
Ask a friend or family member questions they have from the Bible. Take on the task of study to help answer those questions.

☐ completed



# MEDITATING

How to Hear God

## WHAT TO KNOW

Meditation on Scripture is a devotional practice of slow, prayerful reflection that seeks to hear God's voice and internalize His truth. It involves dwelling on a passage, pondering its meaning, and letting the Holy Spirit illuminate how it applies personally. It is not about emptying the mind but filling it with God's truth and love.

## WHERE TO READ

- Joshua 1:8
- Psalm 139



## WHO TO HEAR

*“Meditation is not the art of thinking about God, but of letting God think in us.” RICHARD FOSTER*

*“The Scriptures are a conversation starter – meditation teaches us how to listen as God responds.” HENRI NOUWEN*

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Begin the habit of praying the Lord's prayer daily. After committed to memory begin to pray phrase by phrase and personalize the prayer.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Thank God for hearing you and now invite the Holy Spirit to awaken your heart to his work and ask how he wants you to respond to his prayer.

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Take a walk in nature, meditating on the handiwork of God. Read Matt. 6:26–31 beforehand. How does God speak to you in His creation?

☐ completed

# EATING

How to Practice Lectio Divina

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## WHAT TO KNOW

Lectio Divina, Latin for “Divine Reading,” is a contemplative practice of slowly reading Scripture, meditating on its meaning, and listening for God’s voice. It is not a study method for information, but a devotional rhythm that draws the heart into communion with God. Through this practice, Scripture becomes a living encounter: we sit with God and allow His Word to shape our desires and character.

## WHERE TO READ

- John 15:4–5
- Psalm 1:2–3



## WHO TO HEAR

*“Lectio Divina is not so much reading Scripture as allowing Scripture to read you.” HENRI NOUWEN*

*“In Lectio Divina, we linger, listen, and let God’s Spirit shape our desires before He sends us into action.” DALLAS WILLARD*

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Practice Lectio by chewing on Matthew 7:24–27 for the week. Day 1–2: Read slowly and repeatedly. Sit, breathe and listen for what God might be saying to you personally.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Day 3–4. Ask what this reveals about God’s heart and how Jesus embodied these truths. Ask: “How should this shape my attitudes, choices, or character?”

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Day 5: Think how the passage calls you to serve, love, or witness to others. Identify one small, Spirit-led step you can take this week to live it out.

☐ completed

# MEMORIZING

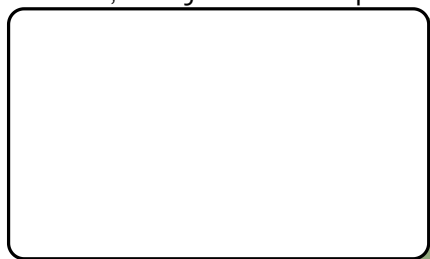
How to Write God's Word on Your Heart

## WHAT TO KNOW

Memorization creates the space for us to choose words and images which shape our hearts and minds. When we write Scripture on our hearts, it becomes more than words on a page—it becomes a living truth we carry into every moment of life. His discipline is not about recitation but about allowing God's voice to dwell within us so that His Word forms our identity, comforts us in trial, and guides our steps..

## WHERE TO READ

- Colossians 3:16
- Psalm 119:11



## WHO TO HEAR

*“Bible memorization is absolutely fundamental to spiritual formation. If I had to choose between all the disciplines of the spiritual life, I would choose Bible memorization, because it is a fundamental way of filling our minds with what it needs.” DALLAS WILLARD*

*“Meditation on memorized Scripture is the fastest path to spiritual transformation.” J.I. PACKER*

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Pick one Psalm to memorize. Recite it daily and test yourself at the end of the week to see if it has been internalized.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Ask God a sin, character defect, or vice that He is calling you to deal with. Memorize a verse that will help you in the midst of temptation.

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Memorize Romans 15:13 and pray it over someone this week as an encouragement to them.

☐ completed

# SUBMITTING

How to Let Scripture Rule Your Life

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## WHAT TO KNOW

Submitting to Scripture is a posture of the heart: it's the choice to live under God's Word rather than under our own impulses, cultural trends, or convenience. It is a posture of obedience that says, "God, Your Word is the authority over me." This is not legalism but discipleship—a humble, loving surrender that frees us to be formed by God and to serve His purposes in the world.

## WHERE TO READ

- Proverbs 3:5–6
- James 1:22



## WHO TO HEAR

*"The Word of God is not given to us for our speculation but for our submission." JOHN STOTT*

*"We do not stand over Scripture to judge it; we stand under Scripture to be judged by it." JI PACKER*

## HOW TO PRACTICE

BE WITH JESUS	BECOME LIKE JESUS	DO WHAT JESUS DID
Begin each reading of Scripture with a prayer of surrender: "Lord, speak, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10). Receive Scripture not as mere words but as God's living voice to you.	Look up Ignatius of Loyola's prayer of Examen. Set the goal of practicing it each night and reflect at the end of the week what you learned.	This week share with someone how God's Word is shaping you. Be sure to talk about not just what you've read but how the Word is changing you.
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# PRACTICE REFLECTION

## **BE WITH JESUS**

How did this practice help you grow closer to God? What did you notice about His presence, guidance, or love?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **BECOME LIKE JESUS**

How did this practice shape your thoughts, attitudes, or actions to be more like Jesus? What challenges did you face?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **DO WHAT JESUS DID**

How did you live out this practice in your community, family, or workplace?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

# RECOMMENDED READING

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## **How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth**

by Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart.

## **Living by the Book: The Art and Science of Reading the Bible**

by Howard Hendricks & William Hendricks.

## **How to Read the Bible in Changing Times: Understanding and Applying God's Word Today**

by Mark L. Strauss.

## **Seven Things I Wish Christians Knew About the Bible**

by Michael F. Bird.

## **The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story**

by Craig Bartholomew & Michael Goheen.

## **Praying the Bible**

by Donald S. Whitney



# SABBATH

**A commitment to rest and  
simplicity in a world of hurry.**

# REST

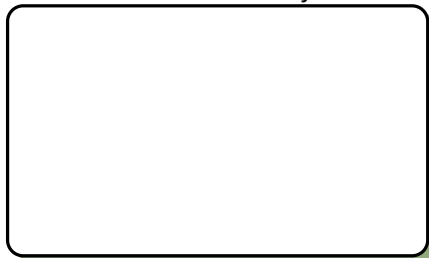
## Understanding Sabbath

### WHAT TO KNOW

Sabbath is a gift: a weekly, embodied invitation to stop striving, rest in God's care, and taste the goodness of life under His rule. It's not merely a pause from work but a reorientation of heart and imagination – a practiced trust that God is Lord of time and of our lives. Practiced with tenderness, Sabbath refreshes our souls, reshapes our desires, and reorients our hands toward mercy and presence with others.

### WHERE TO READ

- Exodus 20:8-10
- Mark 2:27



### WHO TO HEAR

*“People in a hurry never have time for recovery. Their minds have little time to meditate and pray so that problems can be put into perspective. In short, people in our age are showing signs of physiological disintegration because we are living at a pace that is too fast for our bodies.” ARCHIBALD HART*

### HOW TO PRACTICE

BE WITH JESUS
Start by choosing a Sabbath day. Start the first hour of that day in quiet presence: read Psalm slowly, sit in silence, or simply notice God's gifts.

☐ completed

BECOME LIKE JESUS
Create a “Sabbath Rule” card: 3 non-negotiables for the day (ex. no work email, one long meal, one hour of silence).

☐ completed

DO WHAT JESUS DID
The night before Sabbath, enter into sleep as an act of worship. Pray to receive the gift of Sabbath then relax in God and rest.

☐ completed



# RHYTHM

Slowing Down

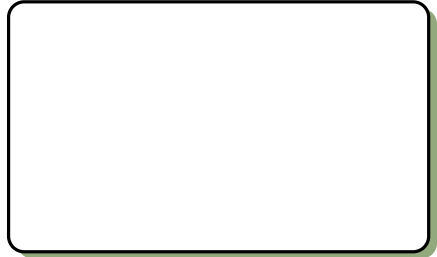
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## WHAT TO KNOW

Sabbath rhythms are more than a single day of rest—they are a way of reorienting your life around God’s presence and pace. In a world that never slows down, Sabbath teaches us to trust God with what remains unfinished and to remember that our worth does not come from what we produce but from who we are in Christ. Jesus invites us to live with unhurried hearts, to walk with Him in a “light and easy yoke” (Matt. 11:28–30).

## WHERE TO READ

- Matthew 11:28–30
- Psalm 23:1–3



## WHO TO HEAR

*“The Hebrew word Shabbat means ‘to stop.’ But it can also be translated ‘to delight.’ It has this dual idea of stopping and also of joying in God and our lives in his world. The Sabbath is an entire day set aside to follow God’s example, to stop and delight.”*

JOHN MARK COMER

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Set aside 3 moments each day to pause—morning, lunch, evening. Simply rest in God’s presence. Practice breathing prayers as a way of slowing down and being still with Him.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Take an online quiz to discover your “Sacred Pathway” by Gary Thomas. Plan how to incorporate that into your Sabbath Rhythm.

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Practice slowing down in daily life—not just on Sabbath. Walk slower, drive the speed limit, eat without rushing, and give people your full attention.

☐ completed

# RESISTANCE

Living in Simplicity

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## WHAT TO KNOW

Sabbath is a loving “no” to endless doing, accumulation, and anxious productivity – and a yes” to simplicity, presence, and trust in God’s provision. Practicing Sabbath resistance is a countercultural witness: by living more simply and resting more regularly we expose an alternate story about what truly sustains human flourishing and we invite others into that freedom.

## WHERE TO READ

- 1 Timothy 6:6-10
- Philippians 4:11-13



## WHO TO HEAR

*“To practice Sabbath is a disciplined and faithful way to remember that you are not the one who keeps the world running.” TIM KELLER*

*“The command is: ‘Do no work.’ Just make space. Attend to what is around you. Learn that you don’t have to do to be.” DALLAS WILLARD*

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

When you feel the urge to “do more” or “accumulate more” stop, breathe, and repeat a simple phrase: “Lord, I rest in You and I am content.”

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Simplicity audit: List possessions, commitments, or subscriptions that feed anxiety or busyness; choose one to cancel or simplify this week.

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Practice resistance by giving away something you are attached to. Journal the feelings that arise and talk to God about them.

☐ completed

# RETREAT

Finding Renewal

## WHAT TO KNOW

A Sabbath retreat is stepping away from the noise of daily life to be alone with God. Jesus himself modeled this rhythm—leaving the crowds, withdrawing to solitary places, and spending the night in prayer. A retreat isn't about running from responsibilities, but about resting in God's presence so that you return renewed. It helps you remember who you are, whose you are, and what really matters.

## WHERE TO READ

- Luke 5:16
- Mark 6:31



## WHO TO HEAR

*“Our retreating is not for our own private spirituality, but for the sake of being made whole in order to give ourselves more fully to others.”*

RUTH HALEY BARTON

*“Retreat is not escaping the world but entering more deeply into the presence of God so you can return to the world with His love.”*

HENRI NOUWEN

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Plan a half-day or full-day retreat this week. Bring only your Bible, a journal. Use the time for silence, Scripture meditation, and prayer. Let yourself be with God, not perform for Him.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Use retreat time to reflect on your heart. Ask: Where am I being drawn closer to Christ? Where am I resisting Him? Write both down.

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Ask God: Who are you sending me to love this week? Where do you want me to be present? Retreat is not just for yourself—it fuels a missional life of compassion, energy, and focus.

☐ completed

# PRACTICE REFLECTION

## **BE WITH JESUS**

How did this practice help you grow closer to God? What did you notice about His presence, guidance, or love?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **BECOME LIKE JESUS**

How did this practice shape your thoughts, attitudes, or actions to be more like Jesus? What challenges did you face?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **DO WHAT JESUS DID**

How did you live out this practice in your community, family, or workplace?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

# RECOMMENDED READING

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**Keeping the Sabbath Wholly**

by Marva Dawn

**The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry**

by John Mark Comer

**The Sabbath**

by Abraham Joshua Heschel

**Subversive Sabbath**

by A.J. Swoboda



# TOGETHER IN MISSIONAL COMMUNITY

## PRACTICES

COMMUNITY

GENEROSITY

HOSPITALITY





# COMMUNITY

**A commitment to belonging  
in a world of isolation.**

# FOUNDATION

Living from the Love of the Trinity

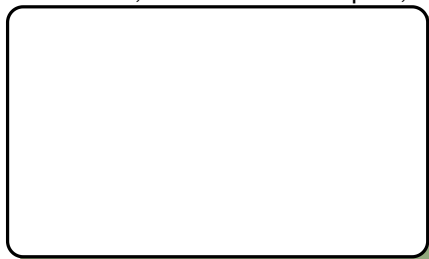
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## WHAT TO KNOW

At the very heart of reality is community. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—an eternal communion of love. To practice community is to enter into this divine life, learning to belong, to be known, and to love as God loves. We were not made to follow Jesus in isolation but to be formed in His family, the church. Practicing community is not always easy, but it is the place where grace is shared, character is shaped, and mission is multiplied.

## WHERE TO READ

- John 17:20–23
- Ephesians 4:1–6



## WHO TO HEAR

*“We can only truly know God when we learn to live in community with His people.” DIETRICH BONHOEFFER*

*“Because the Christian God is not a lonely God, but rather a communion of three persons, faith leads human beings into the divine communion.” MIROSLAV VOLF*

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Reflect on how God invites you into His perfect community as Father, Son, Spirit. Respond to God in prayer with whatever you feel in light of that.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Ask: Where have I loved and made others feel like they belonged? Where have I failed to do that? How do I need help?

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Talk to friends, family, community group, etc. and let them know how much you appreciate being in community with them.

☐ completed



# FAMILY

The Community of the Church

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## WHAT TO KNOW

The church as family is a way of life where belonging comes before usefulness, grace before performance, and mutual care beats isolation. When the church lives like a family we learn to celebrate, mourn, forgive, teach, discipline, and send one another out—so that the love we receive from the Father, through the Son, and by the Spirit becomes the way we actually live.

## WHERE TO READ

- Ephesians 2:19–22
- John 1:12–13



## WHO TO HEAR

*“We go to church so as not to be alone – alone in our joys, alone in our suffering, alone in the everydayness of our lives, alone in the important passages of our lives...We go to church to tell people we love them, and hopefully to hear them tell us the same thing.*

RONALD ROLHEISER

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Pray: Jesus Christ, you have called us your brothers and sisters, giving us a home and a place of belonging. Help us to say yes to it, and to make room for one another at the table of your love. Amen.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

This week, tell someone who is part of Garden City Church they are not alone and they belong here.

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

If you have not yet, this would be a great week to consider starting or joining a community group at Garden City Church.

☐ completed

# FELLOWSHIP

A Shared Life Together

## WHAT TO KNOW

Fellowship is a shared life together where all things are held in common for the good of others and the mission of God. God has gathered us into a fellowship. Not just to share thoughts, and ideas, but to share everything together. To have deep care and concern for one another. In true fellowship, the Spirit weaves us into a new creation community – a living signpost of God's kingdom breaking into the world.

## WHERE TO READ

- Acts 4:32–35
- 2 Corinthians 9:7–14



## WHO TO HEAR

*“The church exists primarily for two closely correlated purposes: to worship God and to work for his kingdom in the world...The church also exists for a third purpose, which serves the other two: to encourage one another, to build one another up in faith, to pray with and for one another, to learn from one another and teach one another, and to set one another examples to follow, challenges to take up, and urgent tasks to perform. This is all part of what is known loosely as fellowship.” NT WRIGHT*

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

A key marker of a shared life together is an ongoing persistence to be closely involved with the family of God. Where do you celebrate this in the church family? Spend time in gratitude to God for what He has created.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Where do you celebrate the shared life in the church family? Write down one idea where do you desire to grow in fellowship?

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Fellowship leads to mission. The shared life of the church holding all things in common becomes an apologetic to the surrounding society. What is an action you can do this week to make this true?

☐ completed

# FRIENDSHIP

Being Known and Loved

## WHAT TO KNOW

Friendship is one of God's greatest gifts for our spiritual formation. We were not made to walk alone; we were created for relationship with God and one another. True friendship reflects God's own heart—it is loyal, sacrificial, honest, and rooted in love. In friendship, we experience God's presence through others, grow in Christlike character, and join together on mission.

## WHERE TO READ

- John 15:13-15
- Proverbs 17:17



## WHO TO HEAR

*“To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is... what we need more than anything.”* TIM KELLER

*“Friendship is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art... It has no survival value; rather it is one of those things which give value to survival.”*

CS LEWIS

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Learn friendship from Jesus by spending time with Him as your truest friend. Repeat this prayer: “Jesus you know me and you love me as a friend.”

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

With a trusted friend, pastor, mentor, therapist, or spiritual director – anyone who you feel safe with and practice the confession of sin.

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

At your next meal or coffee date with friends go around the table and share the highs and lows of the week.

☐ completed

# PRACTICE REFLECTION

## **BE WITH JESUS**

How did this practice help you grow closer to God? What did you notice about His presence, guidance, or love?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **BECOME LIKE JESUS**

How did this practice shape your thoughts, attitudes, or actions to be more like Jesus? What challenges did you face?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **DO WHAT JESUS DID**

How did you live out this practice in your community, family, or workplace?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

# RECOMMENDED READING

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**Created for Community**

by Stanley Grenz

**Life Together**

by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

**Made to Belong**

by David Kim

**The Life We're Looking For**

by Andy Crouch

**When the Church Was a Family**

by Joseph Hellerman

**Find Your People**

by Jennie Allen

**How to Know a Person**

by David Brooks

**A Fellowship of Differents: Showing the World God's  
Design for Life Together**

by Scot McKnight





# HOSPITALITY

**A commitment to welcome in  
a world of exclusion.**



# THE STRANGER

A Practice of Welcome

## WHAT TO KNOW

Hospitality is the spiritual practice of opening our lives and homes to others in love, reflecting the welcome of God himself. In Scripture, hospitality is not entertainment, but the radical act of making space for strangers, neighbours, and the marginalized to experience God's grace through us. To welcome the stranger is to embody the heart of Jesus, who welcomed sinners, outsiders, and the broken into the family of God.

## WHERE TO READ

- Hebrews 13:2
- Romans 15:7



## WHO TO HEAR

*“The stranger’s presence is an opportunity for us to open the door of our lives and in doing so, open the door to God.”*

CHRISTINE POHL

“Jesus’ hospitality was scandalous—he welcomed tax collectors, sinners, and strangers. If we are his disciples, we cannot do less.”

JOHN MARK COMER

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Begin your day by praying: “Lord, help me see the stranger as you see them.” Invite God to give you eyes to see those who feel unseen or unwelcome.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Reflect on this question: Are there barriers to deeper relationship with people who are not like you? Be honest.

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Find someone who’s sitting by themselves at church or someone you’ve never met before and invite them to a meal.

☐ completed

# THE SPACE

Making Room for Others

## WHAT TO KNOW

Do we make space for others to experience God's love through us? In a busy, hurried culture, choosing hospitality is a spiritual discipline that reflects the generosity of God, who makes space for us in His kingdom. When we slow down, share our lives, and welcome others in, we become living witnesses of Jesus' self-giving love.

## WHERE TO READ

- 1 Peter 4:9
- Luke 14:12-14



## WHO TO HEAR

*“Radically ordinary hospitality characterizes those who don’t fuss over different worldviews represented at the dinner table. The truly hospitable aren’t embarrassed to keep friendships with people who are different... Engaging in radically ordinary hospitality means we provide the time necessary to build strong relationships with people who think differently than we do as well as build strong relationships from within the family of God.”*

ROSARIA BUTTERFIELD

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Begin the week by asking God: “Who do you want me to make space for?” Write down one name He brings to mind and hold them in prayer.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Do you regularly eat and drink with people who different from you or who are far from God? Why or why not? Write one action out of your conclusion.

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Create space to invite someone into your ordinary life this week – offering them the gift of presence and belonging.

☐ completed

# THE TABLE

Gathering Around a Meal

## WHAT TO KNOW

Meals are sacred spaces where God's presence is made known and community is formed. In the Gospels, Jesus reveals himself through table fellowship—sharing meals with sinners, friends, and disciples, and instituting the Lord's Supper as the ultimate sign of his hospitality. Gathering around the table, especially the Lord's Table, is both a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice and a foretaste of the great banquet of the kingdom to come.

## WHERE TO READ

- Luke 24:30–31
- 1 Corinthians 10:16–17



## WHO TO HEAR

*“The meals of Jesus represent something bigger... They represent a new world, a new kingdom, a new outlook.”*

NT WRIGHT

*“The Eucharist is not just remembering Jesus; it is participating in the hospitality of God and anticipating the feast to come.”*

HENRI NOUWEN

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Next time you come to the Lord's Table, slow down. Receive the bread and cup prayerfully, remembering Christ's presence with you.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Before each meal pause for 30 seconds of quiet before praying, allowing space to notice God's presence. This slows hurry and cultivates intimacy.

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Host a meal or party that reflects the heart of the kingdom—invite not just friends but those on the margins, the lonely, or the newcomer.

☐ completed

# THE CELEBRATION

The Ultimate Welcome of God

## WHAT TO KNOW

Every act of hospitality is a foretaste of what God has promised: the Great Wedding Feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9). Christian hospitality is a prophetic act. It points forward to the day when Christ will gather His Bride, the Church, and seat us at His banquet table. Practicing hospitality in anticipation of the Great Wedding Feast keeps our eyes fixed on eternity while shaping our tables today to look like God’s Kingdom tomorrow.

## WHERE TO READ

- Revelation 19:9
- Isaiah 25:6



## WHO TO HEAR

*“Meals anticipate the day when we will sit down at the wedding supper of the Lamb in the new creation. Every meal is a rehearsal for that celebration.”*  
TIM CHESTER

## HOW TO PRACTICE

BE WITH JESUS

Read Revelation 19:9 aloud daily for dinner and remember you’re tasting a small glimpse of the coming feast.

☐ completed

BECOME LIKE JESUS

Prepare one meal that’s extra special (candles, better food, longer time). Pause to reflect on how Jesus has prepared a place for you at His table.

☐ completed

DO WHAT JESUS DID

Develop the practice of praying for the people you invite to your home. Pray from them as they come or go. Or send a prayer card with them.

☐ completed

# PRACTICE REFLECTION

## **BE WITH JESUS**

How did this practice help you grow closer to God? What did you notice about His presence, guidance, or love?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **BECOME LIKE JESUS**

How did this practice shape your thoughts, attitudes, or actions to be more like Jesus? What challenges did you face?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **DO WHAT JESUS DID**

How did you live out this practice in your community, family, or workplace?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

# RECOMMENDED READING

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## **The Gospel Comes with a House Key**

by Rosaria Butterfield

## **Missional**

by Alan J. Roxburgh

## **A Meal With Jesus**

by Tim Chester

## **Find Your People**

by Jennie Allen

## **Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition**

by Christine Pohl

## **Made for People**

by Justin Whitmel Earley

## **The Art of Gathering**

by Priya Parker





# GENEROSITY

**A commitment to open-  
handedness in a world of  
accumulation.**

# STEWARDSHIP

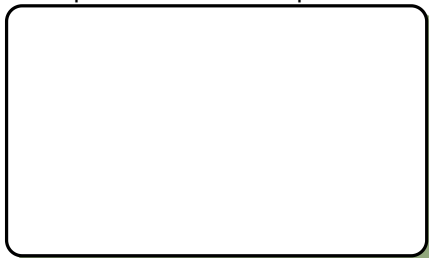
Living in Surrender to God

## WHAT TO KNOW

Scripture encourages us to view our lives through the lens of stewardship rather than ownership. A biblical theology of stewardship rests on three key truths: first, that God owns everything; second, that we are entrusted by Him with resources to do good; and third, that His blessings are given so we can give more, not simply have more. From here we discern what faithful stewardship looks like in our particular season and circumstances.

## WHERE TO READ

- John 17:4
- Romans 12:1



## WHO TO HEAR

*“I’ve heard people say, ‘I want more of a heart for missions’ I always respond, ‘Jesus tells you exactly how to get it. Put your money in missions—and in your church and in the poor—and your heart will follow. Do you wish you cared more about eternal things? The reallocate some of your money, maybe most of your money, from temporal things to eternal things. Watch what happens. As surely as the compass needle follow north, your heart will follow your treasure.” RANDY ALCORN*

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Practice a daily “life audit” prayer: lay before God your time, treasures, and talents asking, “Lord, how do You want me to use these today?”

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Live simply—choose contentment over accumulation. Fast from something (food, purchases, entertainment, social media) to cultivate dependence on God.

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Steward the gospel: Share your faith story, invite someone to church, or simply tell someone how God has been faithful this week.

☐ completed

# TIME

Generous with our Lives

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## WHAT TO KNOW

Time is one of the most precious gifts God has entrusted to us. Unlike money or possessions, once time is spent, it cannot be recovered. We all start each day with 24 hours. 1,440 minutes. 86,400 seconds. Every day. To what or to whom will we give our attention? Stewarding our time means living with intention—learning to slow down, prioritize what matters most, and give our hours to what reflects the heart of Jesus.

## WHERE TO READ

- Psalm 90:12
- Ephesians 5:15–16



## WHO TO HEAR

*“Life is short. Eternity is long. Live like it.”*

JOHN PIPER

*“Time is the primary currency of our lives. What we give our time to is what we are giving our life to.”*

DALLAS WILLARD

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Memorize Ephesians 5:15–16. Recite it daily this week and see where God leads in conversation.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Take time to reorder your schedule around what forms you spiritually—Scripture, Prayer, and Sabbath—rather than what only keeps you busy.

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Articulate the mission God has for you (perhaps ask a spiritual friend to help). Make a list of things in your life that hinder this mission.

☐ completed

# TREASURES

Generous with our Money

## WHAT TO KNOW

Jesus tells us that happiness is found in the opposite place than where we often believe. There is more happiness in living generously than in acquiring money and possessions. When we use our financial resources to worship God, care for others, and fuel Kingdom mission, we discover the joy of storing up treasures in heaven. Generosity with our money breaks the grip of greed, cultivates gratitude, and draws us into deeper dependence on Christ.

## WHERE TO READ

- Matthew 6:19–24
- 2 Corinthians 9:7

## WHO TO HEAR

*“As a pastor I’ve had people come to me to confess that they struggle with almost every kind of sin. Almost. I cannot recall anyone ever coming to me and saying, ‘I spend too much money on myself. I think my greedy lust for money is harming my family, my soul, and people around me.’ Greed hides itself from the victim...Jesus warns people more often about greed than about sex, yet almost no one thinks they are guilty of it. Therefore we should all begin with a working hypothesis that ‘this could easily be a problem for me.’”* TIM KELLER

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

In conversation with God, create a blessing fund and look for ways that God is calling you to use those resources to be a blessing to those around you.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Look at your life and commit to changing one thing that will allow you to be more financially generous. Do it, and give accordingly.

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Choose an organization or non-profit that you want to bless, and then designate income over and above your normal giving to give to that organization.

☐ completed

# TALENTS

Generous with our Gifts

## WHAT TO KNOW

God has uniquely created each of us with skills, passions, and spiritual gifts meant to serve His Kingdom and bless others. Stewardship of our talents means recognizing that our abilities are not self-made or self-serving, but entrusted to us by God to glorify Him and to build up the body of Christ. When we faithfully invest our gifts instead of hiding them, we reflect Jesus Himself—the Servant who poured out His life for others.

## WHERE TO READ

- 1 Peter 4:10
- Matthew 25:14–30



## WHO TO HEAR

*“The stewardship of our gifts is not optional. It is the design of God for the church that every believer be a minister.” JOHN PIPER*

*“The church is not a collection of isolated individuals but a community of gifted people, called to work together for the sake of God’s kingdom.” NT WRIGHT*

## HOW TO PRACTICE

BE WITH JESUS
Practice gratitude by naming specific skills or passions God has entrusted to you and offering them back to Him in worship.

☐ completed

BECOME LIKE JESUS
Take an online “Spiritual Gift” Assessment recommended by Pastor Micah. Share the results with your group or a friend.

☐ completed

DO WHAT JESUS DID
Make a commitment to volunteer your talents to bless your church, community, or a neighbour.

☐ completed

# PRACTICE REFLECTION

## **BE WITH JESUS**

How did this practice help you grow closer to God? What did you notice about His presence, guidance, or love?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **BECOME LIKE JESUS**

How did this practice shape your thoughts, attitudes, or actions to be more like Jesus? What challenges did you face?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **DO WHAT JESUS DID**

How did you live out this practice in your community, family, or workplace?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_



# RECOMMENDED READING

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## **The Treasure Principle**

by Randy Alcorn

## **Counterfeit Gods**

by Tim Keller

## **More or Less**

by Jeff Shinabarger

## **Satisfied**

by Jeff Manion

## **Giving to God**

by Mark Allan Powell



# FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE CITY

## PRACTICES

PEACEMAKING  
SERVICE  
WITNESS





# PEACEMAKING

**A commitment to healing in a  
world of conflict.**

# SHALOM

Pursuing Peace

## WHAT TO KNOW

Biblical shalom is more than peace as the absence of conflict—it is the wholeness, harmony, and flourishing of all creation under God’s reign. Seeking the welfare of the city means praying, working, and living in ways that bring justice, healing, and blessing where God has placed us. The practice of peacemaking is doing the hard work of creating habits of justice, mercy, and forgiveness in order to fulfill our purpose of loving God and others.

## WHERE TO READ

- Jeremiah 29:7
- Isaiah 9:6–7



## WHO TO HEAR

*“The webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight is what the Hebrew prophets call shalom.”*

CORNELIUS PLANTINGA

*“Jesus came not only to save souls, but to inaugurate God’s kingdom of justice, beauty, and shalom on earth as in heaven.”*

NT WRIGHT

## HOW TO PRACTICE

BE WITH JESUS
Pray the Psalms of peace and justice (e.g., Psalm 85, Psalm 122) as daily prayers over your community, city, and world.

☐ completed

BECOME LIKE JESUS
Choose to bless instead of curse – speak words of encouragement over the people that are causing pain in your life.

☐ completed

DO WHAT JESUS DID
Walk your community as a form of prayer. Asking God to bring His peace (shalom) and renewal – noticing places and people who need God’s presence.

☐ completed

# JUSTICE

Making wrong things right

## WHAT TO KNOW

Justice is not just a social idea – it’s at the heart of God’s character. Scripture shows us a God who “loves righteousness and justice” (Psalm 33:5), who defends the vulnerable, and who calls His people to do the same. Practicing justice means living in alignment with God’s heart, seeking to make wrong things right in our relationships, communities, and world. This is not only about activism it is about intimacy with the God who is just.

## WHERE TO READ

- Micah 6:6–8
- Isaiah 1:17

## WHO TO HEAR

*“Jesus stands in a long line of Hebrew prophets who stand for justice in the world. Making wrong things right, crooked things straight. Dr. Gerry Breshears said, ‘Practicing justice is an act of joining God in seeing that the created order (people and everything else) receives what is due.’ And doing this no matter the pain to yourself. It means disadvantaging yourself for the advantage of the ‘other,’ the one in need of care. To follow Jesus is to stand with him for justice.”*

JOHN MARK COMER

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Memorize Micah 6:6–8 this week and recite it daily.

Bonus: Research International Justice Mission.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Make a list of some ways that you or a group you are a part of (like Garden City) are specifically “shaped” to serve in the city around us?

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Engage your community by meeting tangible needs. It could be yard work for an elderly neighbor, childcare for a young mother, or serve someone who is homeless. The sky’s the limit, but the goal is to pursue justice.

☐ completed

# MERCY

Living with compassion

## WHAT TO KNOW

Mercy looks beyond faults to see people through the eyes of compassion. ·Negatively: Mercy is not giving someone what they deserve. Positively: Mercy is giving someone what they do not deserve. Practicing mercy is deeply personal – it requires intimacy with God’s mercy toward us, the Spirit’s transforming work in our character, and the willingness to act with kindness in a world that often chooses harshness.

## WHERE TO READ

- Matthew 5:7
- Luke 6:36



## WHO TO HEAR

*“God does not always act with justice. Sometimes he acts with mercy. Mercy is not justice, but it also is not injustice. Injustice violates righteousness. Mercy manifests kindness and grace and does no violence to righteousness. We may see nonjustice in God, which is mercy, but we never see injustice in God.”*

RC SPROUL

## HOW TO PRACTICE

BE WITH JESUS
Daily prayer in the morning: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. Help me extend mercy now.”

☐ completed

BECOME LIKE JESUS
Begin or end your day by naming 3 ways God has shown you mercy that day. Now name one way you showed mercy.

☐ completed

DO WHAT JESUS DID
Perform a kind act for someone who might not “deserve” it, like helping a neighbour who’s been unkind or giving to someone who hasn’t thanked you.

☐ completed



# FORGIVENESS

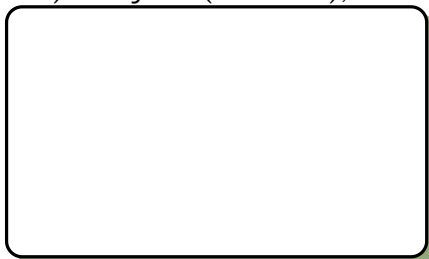
Generous with our Gifts

## WHAT TO KNOW

Forgiveness is one of the most powerful ways we experience and extend the love of God. Forgiveness is not easy—it requires us to release anger, bitterness, and the need for revenge—but it is the pathway to freedom. When we forgive, we are not saying that sin doesn't matter; we are saying that the cross of Christ is enough. Forgiveness is both received (from God) and given (to others), and in both directions it transforms us.

## WHERE TO READ

- Ephesians 4:32
- Matthew 6:14–15



## WHO TO HEAR

*“To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.”*

CS Lewis

*“When I genuinely forgive, I set a prisoner free and then discover that the prisoner was me.”*

LEWIS B. SMEDES

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Pray the Lord's Prayer slowly, pausing at “forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” Sit in silence reflecting on the cross, remembering the cost of your forgiveness.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Meditate on Luke 7:36–50 and ask for God's help in allowing you to see the person who hurt you with empathy. Then ask God to show you the things you've been forgiven for in the past.

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Commit to forgiving. This is the hard part. Commit to releasing a specific person from expectations and judgement, and extend the gift of unmerited grace toward them.

☐ completed

# PRACTICE REFLECTION

## **BE WITH JESUS**

How did this practice help you grow closer to God? What did you notice about His presence, guidance, or love?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **BECOME LIKE JESUS**

How did this practice shape your thoughts, attitudes, or actions to be more like Jesus? What challenges did you face?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **DO WHAT JESUS DID**

How did you live out this practice in your community, family, or workplace?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

# RECOMMENDED READING

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**Generous Justice**

by Tim Keller

**Emotionally Healthy Spirituality**

by Peter Scazzero

**Send My Roots Rain: A Spirituality of Justice and Mercy**

by Megan McKenna

**The Connected Life**

by Todd W. Hall

**The Peacemaker**

by Ken Sande

**Forgive**

by Tim Keller

**Boundaries For Your Soul**

by Alison Cook & Kimberly Miller

**Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy: Discovering the Grace of Lament**

Mark Vroegop

**Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection,  
and the Mission of the Church**

by N.T. Wright





# SERVICE

**A commitment to self-giving  
love in a world of self-interest.**

# SERVING

in Humility

---

## WHAT TO KNOW

Humility is the soil from which service grows. When I try to serve for applause or to prove my worth, the service shrivels. But when I take the towel of Jesus and stoop – admitting need, setting aside posture, and centering on Christ – my hands become instruments of grace. Humble service doesn’t demean; it frees me to love without calculation. It quietly undoes my need to be first and opens me to being used.

## WHERE TO READ

- John 13:1-17
- Philippians 2:1-11



## WHO TO HEAR

*“True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.” CS LEWIS*

*“The way of Christian service is the way of the cross. It is the way of self-denial, of putting others before ourselves, of serving rather than being served.” JOHN STOTT*

## HOW TO PRACTICE

BE WITH JESUS
Daily read and memorize Matthew 22:37-39.

☐ completed

BECOME LIKE JESUS
Practice “towel time”: sit quietly with your Bible over a towel on your lap. Read John 13, ask God to show pride or posture, and receive Jesus’ humble heart.

☐ completed

DO WHAT JESUS DID
Ask God how you can practice “foot washing” this week. It may be literal; it may be symbolic.

☐ completed

# SERVING

in Sacrifice

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## WHAT TO KNOW

Sacrificial service presses against my comforts. Service that costs reveals what I truly treasure. Following Jesus means that my calendar, wallet, and reputation are no longer safe from the call of love. True sacrifice is not proving my worth; it's letting go so others may live. When I give what hurts, I learn how deeply God celebrates in my surrender.

## WHERE TO READ

- Mark 10:43-45
- Matthew 22:37-39



## WHO TO HEAR

*“God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another...I have a part in a great work; I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall love as Christ loved, I shall do His work.”*

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

## HOW TO PRACTICE

BE WITH JESUS
Practice a “surrender examen”: at night, ask Jesus what you have – (time, treasure, talents) that needs to be surrendered for someone else.

☐ completed

BECOME LIKE JESUS
Write 3 columns on paper. Title 1 “For Me” 2 “For Others” 3 “For God.” Note each thing you have done or bought for each category and review at the end of the week.

☐ completed

DO WHAT JESUS DID
Identify one sacrificial commitment you can keep for the next month (volunteer with a local ministry, mentor a youth, commit financial giving above tithing for a need).

☐ completed



# SERVING

with Compassion

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## WHAT TO KNOW

Compassion is the feel of God's heart moving in our own. It begins with eyes that see and a heart that hurts with another. When I practice compassion I discover that service is not a program but a posture – a readiness to enter another's story and bring the presence of Christ. Compassion pushes me to risk awkwardness and to lean into relationship.

## WHERE TO READ

- Luke 10:25–37
- Matthew 9:35–38



## WHO TO HEAR

*“The question now as then, is whether we will use all that Jesus is telling us here about love and grace as a call to extend love and grace to the whole world. No church, no Christian can remain content with living life in a way that allows us to watch most of the world lying half-dead in the road and pass by.”*

NT WRIGHT

## HOW TO PRACTICE

BE WITH JESUS	BECOME LIKE JESUS	DO WHAT JESUS DID
Meditate on the story of the Good Samaritan. Place yourself in different roles as you re-read the story a few times. How do you respond in the story?	Practice listening without fixing. Intentionally ask to hear someone's life story and sit and listen to their story with no goal than to listen.	Simply call or visit someone you know who struggles with isolation and ask how they are doing then pray for them.
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# SERVING

with Courage

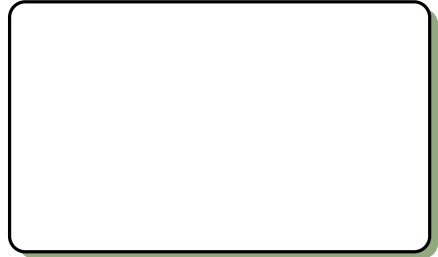
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## WHAT TO KNOW

Courageous service steps forward where safety says ‘stay back.’ It’s showing up for the marginalized, speaking truth in love, and serving when there’s risk of rejection or failure. Courage in service is not bravado; it’s dependence – the Spirit’s power enabling us to act when fear would freeze us. I discover that bravery in service is learned in small steps of obedience before it is required in great ones.

## WHERE TO READ

- Acts 4:29–31
- 2 Timothy 1:7



## WHO TO HEAR

*“Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love.” MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.*

*“Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.” MOTHER TERESA*

## HOW TO PRACTICE

BE WITH JESUS
Memorize 2 Tim. 1:7: Use as a “boldness prayer”: name one fearful barrier and ask God to replace fear with power, love, and self-control.

☐ completed

BECOME LIKE JESUS
Pray for the persecuted church, ask God for strength, courage, and comfort for believers facing harm, imprisonment, and death for their faith.

☐ completed

DO WHAT JESUS DID
Practice one small act of courageous service out of your comfort zone. Reflect on what the Spirit did.

☐ completed

# PRACTICE REFLECTION

## **BE WITH JESUS**

How did this practice help you grow closer to God? What did you notice about His presence, guidance, or love?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **BECOME LIKE JESUS**

How did this practice shape your thoughts, attitudes, or actions to be more like Jesus? What challenges did you face?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **DO WHAT JESUS DID**

How did you live out this practice in your community, family, or workplace?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

# RECOMMENDED READING

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**Serve: Loving Your Church with Your Heart, Time and Gifts**

by Steve Robinson

**Serving Without Sinking**

by John Hindley

**Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work**

by Tim Keller

**What's Best Next: How the Gospel Transforms  
the Way You Get Things Done**

by Matt Perman

**The Call**

by Os Guinness

**Service - How Do I Give Back?**

by Mez McConnell

**Don't Waste Your Life**

by John Piper





# WITNESS

**A commitment to the good  
news in a world of rival stories.**

# IDENTITY

who the gospel makes us

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## WHAT TO KNOW

The gospel reshapes our identity: we are witnesses. Jesus never said, “Go try to be my witnesses.” He said, “You will be.” Why? Because He promised to fill his followers with the Holy Spirit and when He does that, witness becomes the overflow of what He’s done in us. Being Jesus’ witness isn’t just about words. It’s about the totality of our lives –who we are, what we do, and how we speak.

## WHERE TO READ

- Acts 1:8
- Matthew 5:14-16



## WHO TO HEAR

*“The gospel does not become public truth for a society by being propagated as a theory or as a worldview and certainly not as a religion. It can become public truth only insofar as it is embodied in a society (the church) which is both “abiding in” Christ and engaged in the life of the world.”*

LESSLIE NEWBIGIN

## HOW TO PRACTICE

BE WITH JESUS	BECOME LIKE JESUS	DO WHAT JESUS DID
Write an account of how God has been at work in your life for the last year. Ask the Spirit to give you an opportunity to share with someone else.	Your life is the attractor and evidence for the truth of faith in Jesus. Ask a non-Christian friend how they see you different as a Christian.	Pray for the church to be a “city on a hill.” Pray that your life would evidence the beauty and truth of God. Ask God for opportunities to answer these prayers.
<input type="checkbox"/> completed	<input type="checkbox"/> completed	<input type="checkbox"/> completed



# IDENTIFY

who needs the gospel

## WHAT TO KNOW

As missionaries we do not just reflect on the gospel – it leads us to action. There is an urgency to live out our faith in real life and to reach those God loves and is calling. People who live on mission are always on the move towards others. Identification is all about recognizing where God is at work and learning to name faces, hear stories, and pay attention to patterns of loneliness or longing around us.

## WHERE TO READ

- Luke 10:2
- Matthew 4:19

## WHO TO HEAR

*“It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world.”*

CHRISTOPHER WRIGHT

*“The church does not simply have a missions department; it should wholly exist to be a mission.”*

TIM KELLER

## HOW TO PRACTICE

BE WITH JESUS
Set your alarm for 10:02am and pray Luke 10:2 each day.

☐ completed

BECOME LIKE JESUS
Ask: How often do I spend time with people who do not know Jesus? What can I change to increase opportunity?

☐ completed

DO WHAT JESUS DID
Keep a “people map”: write 5 names a short fact about each (home, work, hobby), and then write one way you can bless them. ACT.

☐ completed

# INVITE

others to know the gospel

## WHAT TO KNOW

The mission of the church is the loving, Spirit-empowered invitation to others to meet Jesus. Invitation is the simple, brave practice of offering someone a relational doorway into the gospel. It's not a program or a marketing plan; it's the ordinary practice of living and speaking the gospel so people can see, hear, and respond to the good news. We invite because we've been invited.

## WHERE TO READ

- Romans 1:16
- Matthew 28:18-20



## WHO TO HEAR

*“Do we claim to believe in God? He’s a missionary God. Do you belong to the church? It’s a missionary society.”*

JOHN STOTT

*“The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed.”*

HUDSON TAYLOR

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Spend 5 minutes each day praying for one person you believe God is at work in their heart and mind.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

List the people you interact with on a normal basis. Where are there opportunities to be a witness and share the gospel?

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Invite someone to Garden City Church this week.

☐ completed

# INCREASE

gospel shaped people

## WHAT TO KNOW

Increase is about multiplication: making disciples who make disciples, equipping ordinary believers to live gospel-shaped lives that grow the church. It's not programs but relationships – mentoring, training, and sending – so that the good news spreads through transformed lives. Practicing increase is learning to invest our time and heart in forming others for long-term faithfulness.

## WHERE TO READ

- John 20:21
- 2 Timothy 2:2



## WHO TO HEAR

*“Jesus himself drew a parallel between the commission with which the Father had sent him into the world and the way he was sending the disciples. “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” Mission is intrinsic to the church. The church cannot properly be called such unless it is missionary.”*

NIGEL WRIGHT

## HOW TO PRACTICE

### BE WITH JESUS

Ask God who He is calling you to invest in for this next season. Pray for that person and reach out to them.

☐ completed

### BECOME LIKE JESUS

Make a plan to meet weekly or monthly with the person has called you to invest in.

☐ completed

### DO WHAT JESUS DID

Our city is going to be renewed by the gospel one neighbor, one conversation, one kind act of love at a time. Pray over this thought.

☐ completed

# PRACTICE REFLECTION

## **BE WITH JESUS**

How did this practice help you grow closer to God? What did you notice about His presence, guidance, or love?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **BECOME LIKE JESUS**

How did this practice shape your thoughts, attitudes, or actions to be more like Jesus? What challenges did you face?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## **DO WHAT JESUS DID**

How did you live out this practice in your community, family, or workplace?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

# RECOMMENDED READING

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**The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative**

by Christopher J. H. Wright

**Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in  
Theology of Mission**

by David J. Bosch

**Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the  
Church in North America**

edited by Darrell L. Guder

**The Open Secret: An Introduction to the  
Theology of Mission**

by Lesslie Newbigin

**Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions**

by John Piper

**Theology of Mission: A Concise Biblical Theology**

by J. D. Payne

**Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can  
Become a Missionary in Your Community**

by Ed Stetzer & David Putman

**Serving a Movement: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered  
Ministry in Your City**

by Tim Keller

# NEXT STEPS

for your rule of life

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As we come to the close of this workbook, remember: this is not the end of the journey, but the beginning of a way of life.

The practices you've engaged with here –Prayer, Scripture, Sabbath, Community, Generosity, Hospitality, Peacemaking, Service, and Witness – are not meant to stay on these pages. They are invitations to reorder your days, to train your heart, and to shape your life around the love of God. The Christian life is apprenticeship: we become what we practice.

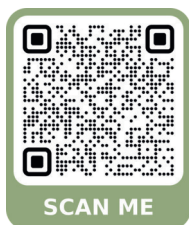
## How We Continue

1. Keep Practicing – Growth comes not in perfection but in perseverance.
2. Stay Accountable – Connect in Community. We need one another to stay rooted and faithful.
3. Live with Hope – Every small act of faithfulness is a seed of the kingdom. God takes our offering and multiplies it for His glory.

*“Following Jesus is not about trying really hard,  
it’s about training really well.”*

JOHN MARK COMER

These practices are your training ground, shaping you day by day into people who love God deeply, love one another sacrificially, and bear witness to the hope of Jesus in our city.



DEVELOP YOUR OWN RULE OF LIFE FOUNDED IN THE PRACTICES OF GARDEN CITY CHURCH. USE THIS RESOURCE FROM PRACTICING THE WAY TO CONTINUE BUILDING A LIFE CENTERED AROUND JESUS.



# RESOURCES

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**Invitation to a Journey**

by M. Robert Mulholland Jr.

**Sacred Rhythms**

by Ruth Haley Barton

**Emotionally Healthy Spirituality**

by Peter Scazzero

**Spiritual Formation**

by Henri Nouwen

**Spiritual Rhythm**

by Mark Buchanan

**Soul Keeping**

by John Ortberg

**To Hell with the Hustle**

by Jefferson Bethke

**The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry**

by John Mark Comer

**The Spirit of the Disciplines**

by Dallas Willard

**Celebration of Discipline**

by Richard J. Foster

**Spiritual Disciplines Handbook**

by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun

**The Deeply Formed Life**

by Rich Villodas

**You Are What You Love**

by James K. A. Smith

**Crafting a Rule of Life**

by Stephen Macchia



# **GROW THE GARDEN PARTNER IN PLANTING**

**Partner with us to see lives  
transformed and our city  
renewed through the hope of  
Jesus.**

**E-transfer  
[give@thegardencitychurch.ca](mailto:give@thegardencitychurch.ca)**