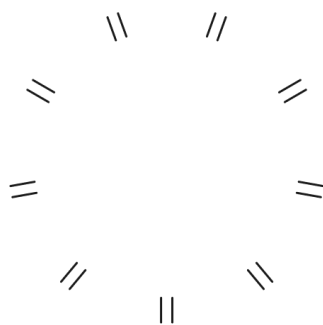


A Four-Session Companion
Guide to Serve in the
Way of Jesus



The Service Practice

Practicing the Way

Practice

One act of service

Service is not just a practice for those of us in Jesus' Kingdom, but a gauge of how much his Kingdom is truly in us.

For this exercise, start by serving someone in your family or relational circle, not a stranger.

This act could be as small as:

- Cleaning the dishes when you don't need to.
- Getting a cup of coffee for a coworker.
- Running an errand for a neighbor.

You don't need to announce or draw attention to what you're doing — it's okay if it goes unnoticed. Just quietly love this person by meeting a practical need of theirs. And as you serve, let the love of God come through your heart, allowing him to love others through you.

Reflect

Before your next time together, take five to ten minutes to journal out your answers to the following three questions:

01 Where did I feel resistance?

02 Where did I feel joy?

03 Where did I most experience God's nearness?

GO DEEPER

Optional resources to enhance your experience of this Practice:



Listen

Rule of Life podcast on Service
(Episode 01)



Read

The Active Life by Parker Palmer
(Chapters 01-02)

Practice

Do one hidden act of service

What if our greatest opportunities to practice loving service are not in places we have yet to enter, but where we already are?

Like last week, find a person in your ordinary life to serve in just one small way, but this time, to try and keep it hidden, or at least, really, really quiet.

This might look like:

- Anonymously buying flowers for someone.
- Dropping off a meal for someone in need and not telling anyone about it.
- Volunteering for a local charity, but not telling any of your friends.

As you serve, pay attention to your heart's desire to be seen. Talk to God about it. Let God free your heart from the approval or disapproval of others.

Reflect

Before your next time together, take five to ten minutes to journal out your answers to the following three questions:

01 What emotions did I feel throughout this exercise?

02 Where did I experience resistance?

03 What invitation(s) from God do I sense here?

GO DEEPER

Optional resources to enhance your experience of this Practice:



Listen

Rule of Life podcast on Service
(Episode 02)



Read

The Active Life by Parker Palmer
(Chapters 03-04)

Practice

Do one unplanned act of service

Practicing radical availability is to consider that the seemingly annoying distractions in life may actually be holy disruptions.

This week, we invite you to do one unplanned act of service. To embrace an interruption and respond with service instead of impatience or annoyance.

You might consider beginning each day by inviting the Spirit's holy interruptions into your day, or pray the Examen each evening, reviewing the day with God and asking the Spirit to highlight the holy interruptions you engaged or missed.

This at least means going a bit slower through your week, and keeping your eyes open for interruptions that may just be God-initiated. And if no noticeable interruption comes, then just go wherever you see a need, and meet that need.

Reflect

Before your next time together, take five to ten minutes to journal out your answers to the following three questions:

- 01 What emotions did I experience when paying attention to the needs around me?
- 02 What resistance did I encounter to being interrupted this week?
- 03 What might God be speaking to me through these interruptions?

GO DEEPER

Optional resources to enhance your experience of this Practice:



Listen

Rule of Life podcast on Service
(Episode 03)



Read

The Active Life by Parker Palmer
(Chapters 05-06)

Practice

Do one act of service for someone in need

Jesus' vision of service invites us beyond charity from afar into love up close: to leave ourselves open to the reality that service may not only turn strangers into neighbors but into family.

In the book of Acts, a synonym for “the poor” is the phrase “those who had need” or “the needy.” In the first century, this would have been: widows, orphans, or those in prison.

In our time, this could be: kids in the foster care system, the elderly living on a fixed income, a single parent, the sick, those dying in hospice, those in prison, or refugees. The reality is that all around, often hiding in plain sight, there are people who are in need.

This week, go serve them.

You can do this through one of two avenues:

- Either through volunteering at a local nonprofit.
- Or going directly to someone you have a relational connection to.

Keep in mind that kinship is often cultivated slowly through regularly serving the same need, among common people — so consider making a commitment to weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly service as you're able.

Reflect

As you come to the end of this Practice, take five to ten minutes to journal out your answers to the following three questions:

- 01 What fears or hesitations did I experience?
- 02 What emotions or thoughts was I surprised by?
- 03 How did I encounter Jesus through the poor?

GO DEEPER

Optional resources to enhance your experience of this Practice:



Listen

Rule of Life podcast on Service
(Episode 04)



Read

The Active Life by Parker Palmer
(Chapters 07-08)

Christ has no body but yours,

No hands, no feet on earth but yours,

Yours are the eyes with which he
looks with compassion on this world,

Yours are the feet with which he
walks to do good,

Yours are the hands, with which he
blesses all the world.

So may you, like Christ, go now not
to be served but to serve.

Recommended Reading

Here are some of our favorite books on the Practice of service for those of you who desire to learn more:

Cruciformity
by Michael Gorman

Invitation to a Journey
by M. Robert Mulholland Jr.

Domestic Monastery
by Ronald Rolheiser

Just Courage
by Gary Haugen

Deeply Formed Life
by Rich Villodas

Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger
by Ronald J. Sider

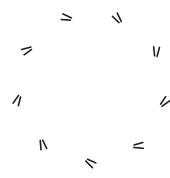
Specifically Chapter 9 on Missional Presence

The Holy Longing
by Ronald Rolheiser

Specifically Chapter 8 on A Spirituality of Justice
and Peacemaking

Practicing the way of Jesus

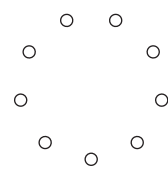
Information alone isn't enough to produce transformation. By adopting not just the teaching but also the practices from Jesus' own life, we open up our entire beings to God and allow him to transform us into people of love. Our nine core Practices work together to form a Rule of Life for the modern era.



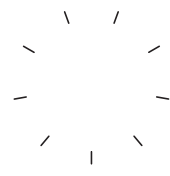
SABBATH



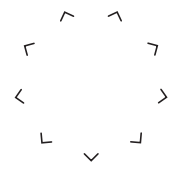
PRAYER



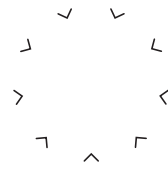
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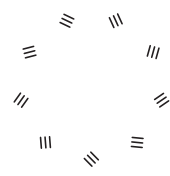
SOLITUDE



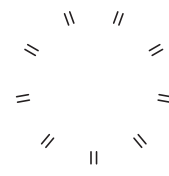
GENEROSITY



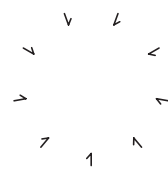
SCRIPTURE



COMMUNITY



SERVICE



WITNESS

Join The Circle

The Circle is a group of monthly givers who decide to live with less so that others can grow in their apprenticeship to Jesus. All of our resources are free because of The Circle and other generous gifts. Together, we can see formation integrated in local churches.

To learn more, visit practicingtheway.org/give.