

RETIREE RULE OF LIFE

PROLOGUE:

The essence of the biblical revelation is about God's relentless pursuit of relationship. Sin does not frustrate His grace. His covenant love runs from Genesis to Revelation in the biblical stories. It permeates the history of the Church. It speaks to my life deeply. He is glorified in our response to His love, a love that is merciful and mighty. He acts on our behalf but calls us to a life of obedience and trust. He has a grand purpose for the world and for the individual. He is at work always, and in all ways, working for the good of those who love Him. He desires for me to love with every part of my being and to love others lavishly and sacrificially. This therefore requires spiritual disciplines to form in me this Christlike life.

By nature I am action-oriented. Through my participation in the Salvation Army Corps, this activism has been underscored in service at every level, in many ways and diverse places. I have also been in leadership positions which called for a lot of preaching, leading, and taking control. By nature or more by nurture, I am more a talker than a listener, more orally oriented than a reader and writer. But I have also discovered the value of silent time alone with God, developing my relationship with Him. This Rule of Life reflects this discovery and also addresses areas of listening and learning. This Rule cannot be and must not be another form of legalistic performance in order to prove myself or gain His approval. These disciplines are paths for relationship. He deserves my best! All for His glory!

AIM:

**TO BE THE PERSON HE WANTS ME TO BE
TO DO WHAT HE WANTS ME TO DO**

The table below will be explained in narrative. Most of what is listed are already elements in my daily life.

| SPIRITUAL | MENTAL | SOCIAL | PHYSICAL | MINISTRY | RESOURCES |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| To know Him Wait on Him Listen Trust & Obey | To keep alert mentally through study and reading | To Invest in the lives of others Listen more than talk | To keep as physically healthy as I can | To establish a local ministry in the corps (church) and one-to-one | To be a faithful steward of my resources |
| 2-3 hours morning 1 hour evening | Meet DMin Course deadlines | Contact family member daily by phone or e-mail | Eat healthy (as on Weight Watchers' program) | Regular Corps attendance | Keep monthly spreadsheet for all income and expenses |
| Wait on God before beginning any reading | Participate fully in residential course | Connect with closest friends daily by phone | Exercise (gym & swimming) 5 days a week | Bible Study for youth | Give generously beyond my tithe |
| One Year Bible | Read an autobiography each month | e-mail contact with specific friends | Regular physical check-ups | Lead home Bible Study | Save monthly for education |
| 10 Psalms daily | Work on autobiography | Keep in touch with Cohort 7 | | Visit seniors in our congregation | Give clothes away when I <u>need</u> to buy new ones |
| Other sources - Weatherhead, Murray, Carmichael, Myers, etc. | Keep up with world news through various media sources | Do not multi-task when on the phone | | Cultivate the art of listening, confidentiality, | Set a limit to eating out to once a week |
| Journal daily | | Read e-mails carefully twice and answer specifically | | Write notes of encouragement and gratitude | |
| Use Intercession List (Include world | | Be intentional in hospitality with neighbour | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| issues) | | | | | |
| Spiritual Direction | | | | | |

SPIRITUAL:

My devotional period for many years has been an hour in the mornings. Since retirement, I have the luxury of spending 2-3 hours in the sacred space of my sunroom. Though the structure of my time varies, it presently involves this pattern:

- a half hour of just sitting quietly before the Lord to sense his Presence. I mentally reflect on Scripture I know, the Lord’s Prayer, Salvation Army doctrines, Attributes of the Trinity.
- Prayers to Start My Day by David O’Malley give a brief entrance into the day with Scripture, meditation, reflection questions and prayer. This also included the Benedictus and the Lord’s Prayer
- Now involved in a 30 week Ignatian Exercises, I spend an hour in Lectio Divina on the passages recommended and in journaling on this.
- Generally, I keep up with the Bible readings from the One Year Bible so as to read through the Bible yearly.
- A daily reading of 10 Psalms is part of my prayer time. I have personalized many of these so that I read them as prayers and not in the third person.
- Other excellent devotional resources are available and used at various times – Weatherhead’s Private House of Prayer, The Salvation Army Song Book, Streams in the Desert, Writings of Amy Carmichael and Prayers of Ruth Myers.
- I journal daily and it is always written as a prayer, often more like the prayer of Examen.
- My intercession list contains my large family, friends, appointments I have held and the various Army territories and commands, world concerns, and special requests.
- My Spiritual Director is a seasoned guide, a Roman Catholic who has kindly offered to lead me through a 30 week encounter with the Ignatian Exercises.
- The added discipline to this Rule of Life is an hour in the evening for spiritual reading and Prayer of Examen. I have felt convicted for some time that my evening of watching TV should be limited and a more wholesome preparation should take place before bed time.

Far from being a checklist for devotional activities I truly want these hours to be communion with the Lord, to listen, wait, obey and trust as he speaks.

MENTAL

Though I enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program for ministry reasons as well as personal formation, I believed it was necessary in retirement to keep my mind alert. The discipline of study provided for reading and writing essays as well, which as mentioned in the prologue, were areas of limitation for me.

- All of my Cohort colleagues are presently engaged in ministry or careers. I have time to give to this course and therefore meeting course deadlines is a must. I have no excuse and therefore must discipline myself to make assignments priorities.
- I love the classroom and am fully engaged in that setting. The discipline for me is to limit my oral participation and listen, not just to the professor but to other students as they contribute.
- With so much reading for the course, it would be easy to just focus on the texts assigned or recommended. However, I have not read much in autobiography and feel the extra reading in this area would be instructive, stimulating and inspirational.
- Our major project is our spiritual autobiography. Though some progress has been made in outlining this, I must keep it before me, revising as I read and as the Spirit stirs me to include or exclude items.
- World news has a fascination for me but I do need to keep abreast of national and local news. It not only provides areas of discussion with friends and family but also requires a commitment for intercession.

SOCIAL

As an extrovert, I have often gained my energy from people, though in recent months, my desire to be alone has changed that somewhat. It would be easy in these days to limit my social contact. This may have something to do with age and/or circumstances. I have been indulged by wonderful friends who listen and have invested deeply in my life. I believe now I must learn to do the same for them and for others in my circle of influence, most certainly my family.

- I am a member of a very large family and there is seldom a day when I am not in contact by e-mail with one or more. But I feel I need to do better with phone calls especially with siblings who are not online. Certain nieces and nephews are in regular contact but it is time for me to broaden that circle as well. Several are not Christians and to neglect them, would be to neglect my spiritual responsibility.
- I am in daily contact with my three closest friends. There is seldom a time when we do not share our devotions or some discovery through our readings. These three are the very opposite to Job's three friends and I need to be more of a giver than I am. Here is where investing and listening are needed.
- Having served overseas, I am blessed with a wide circle of friends and intercessors who keep in touch. I need to continually invest in this gift of online communication.
- The Lord has blessed me with a new group of sojourners with my Cohort. With our Residential Course being only twice a year, and our small groups meeting periodically, e-mail contact will serve to deepen relationships as will consistent intercession.
- I have a habit of multi-tasking when I am on the phone. Friends are very patient with me but
It means that people do not get my full attention. It hinders listening and therefore I must consider this a discipline to take time to fully engage in conversation.
- Once again reading is a challenge, not that I am inept at it but that I scan e-mails and letters and do not read them carefully, often missing important information. I have to change this habit and therefore decided to read each e-mail carefully at least twice. This will be a form of listening for me.

- Living in a condo building, it is easy to have friendly though superficial contact with residents on the elevator or in the swimming pool. But I am blessed with two neighbors who make more substantial contact and I must cultivate these important friendships with the grace of hospitality.

PHYSICAL

The relationship I have entered into with God has taught me that he is interested in my whole person, not just my soul or my mind but also my body. To love him with all my strength means to take responsibility for the health of my body as much as possible. Therefore this will involve

- Healthy eating. I have been on a Weight Watcher's program now and then as the need has arisen. For me it means eating wisely and exchanging junk food for fruit, vegetables, grains, protein.
- With a gym and swimming pool in my building and a park nearby, I will discipline myself to a program of exercise 5 days a week for an hour and a half.
- I already schedule annual physical check-ups and will continue this.

MINISTRY

Retirement from active Salvation Army duty does not mean that one retires from ministry. I have committed myself to being a faithful soldier of the North York Corps (church).

- Regular Sunday attendance is a must but I must also support the corps for special events and program.
- I led two series of weekly Bible studies last year, one for youth and one in a home with local people. I am committed to doing this again this year and any other teaching required of me locally.
- Long before I retired, I wanted to have a ministry in caring for our seniors with visitation. However, I would not want to limit my pastoral concern for the elderly but would be available for one-to-one ministry for any of our congregation. Of course, this will come with the approval of our corps officer.
- For ministry in Bible studies and visitation, I want to further cultivate the art of listening and confidentiality. Those I meet in groups or in one-to-one encounters must have confidence that I am trustworthy.
- There is also a ministry in writing personal notes to those in the corps who would benefit from a word of encouragement.

RESOURCES

Though I am not rich, I am not poor. To be the person he wants me to be and do what he wants me to do, means to live generously.

- I keep a monthly spreadsheet to account for my fixed income and expenses as well as the variables. This practice will continue since it helps me alter my spending to be consistent with my aim to be a faithful steward of my resources.
- The regular tithe is a habit but donations to our youth, our mission and our family services work are additions. Beyond this, there will be times when I must be willing to give as the needs of others arise.
- My education costs are substantial and therefore, saving must be part of my monthly calculations.
- It is so easy to be caught up in a consumer age. I plan to change how I spend with regards to clothes, buying what I need and giving clothes away that are no longer needed.
- I will limit my eating out to once a week.

CONCLUSION

Many of the elements in this Rule of Life already comprise my rhythm of life weekly, monthly and annually. Though not included under the spiritual heading, the silent retreat required for one of my courses is planned for this month and may as a consequence be considered as a quarterly, bi-annual or annual discipline. Living alone provides ample time for silence and solitude but perhaps a “go away” day or two may be worth considering.

In terms of accountability, I will share this Rule of Life with my three friends and ask that they hold me accountable.