

My Spiritual Agenda: A Brief Guide to Designing a Rule of Life

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The Problem –

Many Christians today are longing for a deep and holy order in their lives. This longing for order is not simply the superficial desire for “peace and quiet” around the home. Beyond the wish that our computer would never freeze, that our kids would never fight, or that telephone solicitors would never interrupt, there is a longing for something more. Whether vague or clear, whether stimulated by growth or disappointment, most of us, at one time or another, have felt a longing for each of the elements of our life to have its proper attention—and not just the “duties” of life but especially the core elements of our personalities and histories. We long for the whole of our life to be somehow centered around our relationship with God.

A Practical Means

One tool that has been used by Christians through the centuries to promote lives ordered around relationship with God is some kind of written record of one’s intentions. These written reflections have been called by various names. Puritan divines spoke of resolutions” or “covenants.” Methodists spoke of “instituted and prudential means of grace.” Western monastic communities spoke of “Rules.” Since we are placing our focus here on relationship with God, let’s call it a *spiritual agenda*.

What is a Spiritual Agenda?

A Spiritual Agenda is a written reflection of one’s specific spiritual aims, which one promises to keep, and which are evaluated regularly, both individually and in the presence of a significant other.

What are the benefits of a spiritual agenda? A spiritual agenda:

- a. provides a unifying focus for life
- b. leads one toward spiritual development
- c. provides a setting of unthreatening accountability
- d. helps us to take charge of our time

Here are a few sample areas to consider:

General Statements of Intention: (desire to love with sincerity, or to seek God...)

Prayer Life: Specific devotional practices (worship, intercession, meditation), times, places

Study: Reading, memorizing, research, listening, attitudes to take (diligence, openness...)

Family Life: Time spent, activities listed...

Fellowship or Relationships: Key relationships of focus, attitudes or actions to cultivate, meetings or activities in which to participate, letters to write...

Health: Exercise, diet...

Financial Life: Record of income and expenses, budgets, lifestyle choices, contributions

Community Life: Read newspapers, write letters on social issues, volunteer at organizations,

And so on...

Here's a sample agenda as you might write it for a few areas:

1. Prayer: To meditate on one Psalm daily S M T W Th F S

2. Family: To spend quality time with my spouse 3 times a week (2 hr. block minimum)

3. Study: How diligent was I? (rank from 1- 10) _____

4. Did I show Christian love to others this week?

Comments

Now here's your chance. Write a rough draft of your own spiritual agenda. And have fun exploring!