

Rule for Real Life

A Rule of Life for The Crossing Community

A single coal does not stay on fire on its own. It needs the warmth and presence of the other coals to keep burning.

~ Jason Long, member of The Crossing community

The Crossing is a community of sisters and brothers offering a compassionate, progressive, creative, generous, radically welcoming expression of God's life and love in the city of Boston. From that community has grown this Rule of Life, which like the Rule of a monastic community spells out our commitment to discipleship.

We believe we are called to follow in the footsteps of the ancients and live the way of Jesus: nurturing God's Spirit in and among us; gathering everybody for prayer and celebration at God's table; bearing the good news of hope and resurrection into the world; and spreading God's mission of healing and transformation.

But we know we cannot live this dream alone. We need each other. We need authentic, concrete spiritual practices that form our lives in the shape of Jesus' life. We need to make real commitments to God and to each other as we journey together closer to the heart of God and to the deepest callings on our own lives.

We offer this Rule for Real Life as an invitation to all in our community. Whether The Crossing is your primary community or a secondary gathering where you seek renewal, whether you live near our home at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral or have moved to far flung places, we hope you feel inspired and called to take up this Rule, to see this community as your own and to join us as a companion on the way. We do need each other. This Rule for Real Life describes a way of walking together, and following Jesus together and making something extraordinary, holy and whole of our daily, ordinary, (seemingly) individual lives.

This Rule for Real Life is offered in faith and hope by and for The Crossing community. ~ January 15, 2009

One: Radical Welcome

"You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Deuteronomy 10:19)

We commit ourselves to practice radical welcome in our worship, in our community fellowship and hospitality, and in our daily lives. We will embrace - with our practices and our hearts - the voices and gifts and transforming presence of all God's people, especially groups the church has least sought, heard and honored.

This commitment matters because we know God is speaking and moving in surprising places, and Jesus was constantly taking risks and going to the margins. We want to embrace those gifts from the margins in our worship and in our lives. It matters because in embracing and listening to The Other, we consistently find our hearts broken open as we are able to more fully embrace Christ.

Two: Prayer and Worship

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2:42)

We commit ourselves to deeply engage a personal spiritual practice, throughout the week; to worship on Thursday nights - either physically (attending the regular worship gathering) or virtually (reaching out to a member of the community online or by phone on a Thursday); and to take at least one retreat a year, either personally or as part of The Crossing or another Christian community.

This commitment matters because spiritual practice is just that: a practice, one that requires intention, focus and consistency. This kind of spiritual practice is crucial to growing and deepening our relationship with God and honing our ability to hear God's calling on our lives.

Three: Christian Community

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." (John 15:12)

We commit ourselves to nurture the life of God in our community by gathering with other members of The Crossing community regularly, outside of worship, in one-on-one or small group settings, for care and fellowship. When we are not able to gather physically, we will connect virtually once a week with a member of the community, or take time to pray for the worshipping community on a Thursday.

This commitment matters because care for our community is care for the body of Christ, and because our mission as healers in the world requires us to nourish each other. It matters because we are more than a worship service - we are a worshipping community. And more than a worship community, we are a Christian community, a body of unlikely pilgrims seeking to live the Way of Christ and pursue his mission together.

Four: Relationships

“You shall love your Abba God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37-39)

We commit ourselves to live in responsible, loving relationship with self and others. We will pay prayerful attention to our bodies, seeking a variety of ways to nurture our own emotional and physical health. As God's beloved people, we also commit to bear the love of God in our friendships, in our dating, with our partners and spouses, with our children, and in our working lives. We particularly affirm sexuality as God's precious gift and creation, always to be expressed with care, prayer and faithful discernment.

This commitment matters because relationships are how we learn to see and receive all - including ourselves - as Christ. We need each other's support and challenge, in all our relationships, and need to see them as the context where we learn to listen, offer compassion, develop patience, become partners in ministry and slowly grow into the fullness of Christ.

Five: Justice and Service

“What does God require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6:8

We commit ourselves to discern and live out the core Christian values of peace and justice. In particular, we commit to participate regularly in one ministry/program of justice, healing and reconciliation. In general, we will discern how our actions and choices reinforce structures of injustice and oppression, and then learn and commit to use our power and gifts to name and heal injustice locally and globally.

This commitment matters because we seek to walk in the way of Jesus, spreading God's mission of healing, justice and transformation. Even as we engage in this mission, we know we will find ourselves healed and transformed, and more capable of seeking and serving Christ in all people.

Six: Resources

“What does it profit them if they gain the whole world but lose or forfeit themselves?” Luke 9:25

We commit ourselves to economic discipleship, giving generously (to The Crossing community and to other ministries/efforts), and spending well (by making economic choices that demonstrate compassion and awareness of global poverty and environmental impact).

This commitment matters because our relationship to money and time has everything to do with our relationship with God. We want to use our money and our time to sustain the life of the world, to sustain the life of The Crossing community, and to reflect a commitment to living as we were made to live: in interdependence and compassion, with simplicity and intention.

A Final Prayer of Commitment ...

(adapted from the Bishop's Concluding Prayer in the Service of Baptism, Book of Common Prayer [305])

Almighty and everliving God, let your gracious hand ever be over us your servants; let your Holy Spirit ever be with us; and so lead us in the knowledge and obedience to your Word, that we may serve you in this life, and dwell with you in the life to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.