

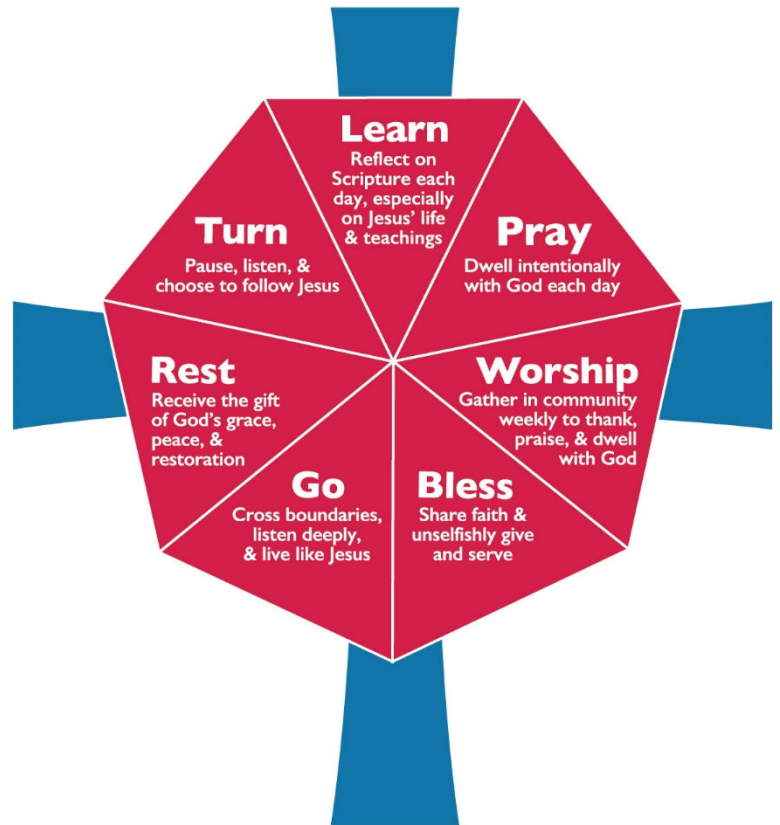
# THE WAY OF LOVE

## *Practices for Jesus-Centered Life*

*I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. — Ephesians 3:17-19*

### What is the Way of Love?

The **Way of Love** is an intentional commitment to follow Jesus and adopt a set of practices - Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, Rest - that form us and our communities into the likeness of Jesus Christ. More than a program or curriculum, it is a return to the ancient pathways that followers of Jesus have walked for centuries. They knew the power of committing to a core set of practices and gathering in a small group where you find love and support for living the Jesus Way. If you seek not only to worship Jesus but also to live his resurrected life in the world, adopt a rule of life like the Way of Love and find a community with which to practice it.



### What is a Rule of Life?

#### How Do I Begin?

A Rule of Life is an intentional commitment to a set of practices that provide guidance, rhythm and inspiration for living a beautiful, meaningful and holy life. As we place these practices at the heart of our daily lives and join with companions who share the commitment, we grow more and more in the unselfish, hope-filled way of the One we follow.

### Exploring and Living the Practices

We invite you to take time exploring the practices for living a Jesus-centered life. Turn this page, sit with the words from scripture, pray over the practice, and discern how God is calling you to act and commit. Use these questions to guide your reflection:

- What are the ways God is calling me to regularly engage in this practice?
- How could – or how do – I incorporate this practice into my life regularly?
- With whom do I need to journey in order to keep a commitment to this practice?

Continue by exploring videos and resources available at [www.episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove). Pay special attention to the small group curricula, because the only way to live the Way of Love is in a community of love, support and accountability. In this way, we follow Jesus, grow in love and enjoy the fullness of God.

## **TURN: Pause, listen and choose to follow Jesus**

*As Jesus was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. – Mark 2:14*

Like the disciples, we are called by Jesus to follow the Way of Love. With God's help, we can turn from the powers of sin, hatred, fear, injustice, and oppression toward the way of truth, love, hope, justice, and freedom. In turning, we reorient our lives to Jesus Christ, falling in love again, again, and again.

## **LEARN: Reflect on Scripture each day, especially on Jesus' life and teachings.**

*"Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." – John 14:23*

By reading and reflecting on Scripture, especially the life and teachings of Jesus, we draw near to God and God's word dwells in us. When we open our minds and hearts to Scripture, we learn to see God's story and God's activity in everyday life.

## **PRAY: Dwell intentionally with God daily**

*He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." – Luke 11:1*

Jesus teaches us to come before God with humble hearts, boldly offering our thanksgivings and concerns to God or simply listening for God's voice in our lives and in the world. Whether in thought, word or deed, individually or corporately, when we pray we invite and dwell in God's loving presence.

## **WORSHIP: Gather in community weekly to thank, praise, and dwell with God**

*When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. – Luke 24:30-31*

When we worship, we gather with others before God. We hear the Good News of Jesus Christ, give thanks, confess, and offer the brokenness of the world to God. As we break bread, our eyes are opened to the presence of Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are made one body, the body of Christ sent forth to live the Way of Love.

## **BLESS: Share faith and unselfishly give and serve**

*"Freely you have received; freely give." – Matthew 10:8*

Jesus called his disciples to give, forgive, teach, and heal in his name. We are empowered by the Spirit to bless everyone we meet, practicing generosity and compassion and proclaiming the Good News of God in Christ with hopeful words and selfless actions. We can share our stories of blessing and invite others to the Way of Love.

## **GO: Cross boundaries, listen deeply and live like Jesus**

*Jesus said to them, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." – John 20:21*

As Jesus went to the highways and byways, he sends us beyond our circles and comfort, to witness to the love, justice, and truth of God with our lips and with our lives. We go to listen with humility and to join God in healing a hurting world. We go to become Beloved Community, a people reconciled in love with God and one another.

## **REST: Receive the gift of God's grace, peace, and restoration**

*"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." – John 14:27*

From the beginning of creation, God has established the sacred pattern of going and returning, labor and rest. Especially today, God invites us to dedicate time for restoration and wholeness - within our bodies, minds, and souls, and within our communities and institutions. By resting we place our trust in God, the primary actor who brings all things to their fullness.