

# Our rule of life

**silence**  
**song**  
**scripture**  
**sacrament**  
**service**



St Saviour's  
Wendell Park  
W12

# Our rule of life

Our walk with God involves every aspect of our lives. Our personal lives, our life as a church community, and our public lives out in the world. This is why we have developed this 'rule of life' as a church, to help us focus on who we are and how we live as followers of Jesus.

Living in London today is busy, loud and distracting. Never before have we all been so interconnected and bombarded by information. The digital age can leave us restless and lacking peace. But in the midst of it all, our church community can help us as we seek to think, pray and live well in our walk with Jesus.

The idea of a rule of life, or a way of living, goes back to the Book of Acts, where the first Christians were known as 'followers of the way'. Written rules of life for Christians developed in the third century, in the time of the Desert Fathers and Mothers. They wrote down the best-loved stories and sayings of their teachers, which grew into handbooks for how to follow the Christian way.

Our rule of life is written in the same spirit. It is based around five areas: silence, song, scripture, sacrament and service. It describes the essentials which keep us and our church healthy and growing in the Spirit.

# Silence

Although our church services are filled with prayers, songs, readings and teaching, we recognise that our prayer life flows from encountering God in silence. While we know the presence of God in the daily ebb and flow of our lives, taking time to listen to God in silence is a key to our growth.

'Be still and know that I am God,' says Psalm 46.

Jesus said, 'When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.'

We seek to strengthen these times of personal prayer in our services with moments of quiet, as in our time of reflection following the sermon. We also have an extended time of silence in our Compline service on Tuesday evenings.

'We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature – trees, flowers, grass – grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence... We need silence to be able to touch souls.' St Teresa of Calcutta

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a still, small voice.

1 Kings 19:11-12

# Song

While we may start in silence and contemplation, we do not feel restricted to stay there. Our prayer and worship naturally expresses itself in song, as we offer God our thanks and praise, and call on him for help. We believe that the Holy Spirit inspires our worship, breathing new life into us as we draw near to God.

We are created to worship. The Westminster Shorter Catechism memorably captures this truth by saying that our

The Lord is my strength  
and my shield;  
my heart trusts in him,  
and he helps me.  
My heart leaps for joy,  
and with my song  
I praise him.

Psalm 28:7

chief purpose in life is 'to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever'. Since all of us worship something or someone, we are called to make sure that we worship the only person truly worthy of our honour and praise.

Music for us is an important part of our worship of God. Our services often begin with song, for both children

and grown-ups, and our worship team leads us in singing a mixture of contemporary songs and much-loved older hymns.

'The closer you get to the truth, the clearer becomes the beauty, and the more you will find worship welling up within you. That's why theology and worship belong together. The one isn't just a headtrip; the other isn't just emotion.'

N.T. Wright

# Scripture

We believe the Bible is the inspired word of God. Its stories, sayings and teaching are trustworthy and true, and show us how to be faithful to God in what we believe and how we live.

We believe it is essential that God's people engage with scripture in order to live well. So we encourage our adult members to have a personal practice of Bible reading, as well as joining one of our home groups. And we encourage our children and young people to discover scripture each Sunday in Kids' Church and Youth Church.

Every Sunday, we hear readings from the Old Testament, the New Testament letters, and from one of the four Gospels. These readings are from the lectionary, the Church's calendar of readings through the year, and so we are following the same passages of scripture as Christians across the global Church. Our sermons are based on the readings, and focus our attention on the life, work, and teaching of Jesus throughout the year.

'Never approach the words of the mysteries that are in the scriptures without praying and asking for God's help. Say, "Lord, grant me to feel the power that is in them." Reckon prayer to be the key that opens the true meaning of the scriptures.' St Isaac the Syrian

'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.'

2 Timothy 3:16-17

# Sacrament

The sacraments of baptism and communion enable us to receive God's grace in our lives, through the power of the Holy Spirit. St Augustine described the sacraments as 'outward and visible signs of inward and invisible grace'.

In the Eucharist (a word which means 'thanksgiving') we gather around the Lord's table to share bread and wine, remember the death

of Jesus on the cross, and to be nourished and strengthened as we receive the body and blood of Jesus, which he gave for our salvation.

We participate in a sacrament every week, celebrating the Eucharist each Sunday unless we have a baptism. Receiving communion together, week by week, is a wonderfully visible reminder of how we belong together as a community of God's people. All baptised Christians of any age or denomination are welcome to receive with us at the Lord's table.

We also believe in 'the sacrament of the present moment'. God is present to us day by day, in the everyday and the apparently ordinary things of life, and we are called to orient our hearts towards him, receiving him into the whole of our lives.

'Think often on God, by day, by night, in your business and even in your diversions. He is always near you and with you; leave him not alone.' Brother Lawrence

'He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you."'

Luke 22:19

# Service

We believe that God calls us to love one another, and to express that love by serving each other. Jesus is our example, and we learn from him how to serve others in our homes, among our friends, in our neighbourhoods, in the places where we work, and in our church. 'Love one another,' said Jesus, 'as I have loved you.'

St Saviour's is like an extended family. We pray, eat, laugh, learn, work, play, weep and worship together. We share our joys and sorrows as members of a loving and servant-hearted

**'Jesus wrapped a towel around his waist, poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet.'**

**John 13:4-5**

community. It's also a place where we learn how to give, whether it's giving financially, or giving time to serve on one of our church teams.

Our teams cover areas such as running the creche, singing in the worship team, doing a Bible reading,

making tea and coffee, welcoming people to church, teaching in junior church, or looking after sound and visuals during services. There are plenty of opportunities for everyone to serve.

As a church, we also support people in need, working with charities such as Glass Door and The Upper Room, and raising money to offer a helping hand to people in our community, or living locally to us, who need some support.

'Great occasions for serving God come seldom, but little ones surround us daily.' St Francis de Sales

## Silence

We seek to be still, listening to God, knowing he is always with us and that he loves us

## Song

We lift our hearts to God in praise, worshipping him in Spirit and in truth

## Scripture

We ask God to shape and direct our lives according to the teaching of the scriptures

## Sacrament

We gather to be nourished by God in the bread and wine of communion, and the waters of baptism

## Service

We follow the self-giving way of Jesus, who came into the world to serve others

