

The Prayerbook Life

An Anglican Rule rooted in the Oxford Holy Club (1729–1735) and early Methodist rules (1738–1743) seeking to observe and obey the Christ's call, as ordered by the Book of Common Prayer

Purpose & Spirit: To grow in holiness of heart and life by ordering our days around prayer, Scripture, holy communion, fasting, feasting, confession, catechesis, singing, mutual accountability, and works of mercy—in accordance with the prayerbook and under the authority of my parish.

The Holy Intentions

I intend, with God's help, to keep this Rule for the sake of Christ, his Church, and my neighbor:

A. Works of Piety (toward God)

1. Daily Prayer (Morning & Evening): using Family Prayer and advancing to the full offices as found in the Book of Common Prayer. Endeavoring daily to pray constantly and freely.
2. Daily Scripture reading: read attentively, keep notes, and discuss in small group.
3. Fasting (or abstinence): on Fridays until mid-afternoon (3 p.m. or as health allows). Working towards keeping the Lenten fast and vigil fast before feast days in accordance with prayerbook.
4. Frequent Confession and Communion (ideally weekly and holy days), hearing the Ministry of the preached Word and receiving the sacrament as often as providence allows and not without reflecting upon my sins and confessing to God prior to taking the Lord's Supper. Examining my heart and refraining from communion if I remain unrepentant or fail to forgive my neighbor.
5. Singing and catechesis: in the home and small group by using the catechism and hymnal. Seeking over time to memorize the catechism and the Psalter through singing or other means.

B. Works of Mercy (toward neighbor)

6. Weekly undertake a personal act of mercy (visit, call, feed, tutor, encourage) outside my family.
7. Monthly join a shared act of mercy with your small group or parish (e.g., prison or re-entry ministry, food insecurity, clothing needs, caring for the home and lawn of a shut-in or elderly, or other neighborhood care).
8. Simplicity and support: Practice financial simplicity in order to directly support relief of those in need while also examining and reducing my own vain spending, apparel, and consuming that glorifies my flesh and not the kingdom.

C. Fellowship & Accountability

9. Join a small group (10–12 persons) meeting at least bimonthly for spiritual conversation, counsel, renewal, encouragement, and prayer under the direction and submission to the parish.
10. Practice regular self-examination (the Examen) and keep short accounts with others in accountability.

The Weekly Rhythm

- Sunday: Holy Communion; review this Rule; plan at least one act of mercy (individual or family); meet with my small group (or on the normal day of the week for meeting).
- Monday–Saturday: Daily Offices, Scripture, and acts of mercy. Fast on any vigil and attend as able any Holy Day service.
- Friday: Fast/abstain until ~3 p.m. (health permitting), concluding with prayer.
- Saturday: Intentionally confront one's sin and confess it to our Father before Sunday service.

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The Examen*

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?
3. Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence?
4. *Do I mention the fault of any behind their back, and do I stop others from doing the same?*
5. Can I be trusted?
6. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work, or habits?
7. *Am I patterning diligence, frugality, self-denial, and taking up the cross daily?*
8. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
9. Did the *Lord Jesus* [Bible] live in me today?
10. Do I give it time to speak to me every day?
11. Am I enjoying prayer?
12. When did I last speak to someone else about my faith?
13. Do I pray about the money I spend?
14. *Do I give alms of what I possess and to the utmost of my power or do I hold back?*
15. Do I get to bed on time and get up on time?
16. Do I disobey God in anything?
17. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
18. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
19. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy, or distrustful?
20. How do I spend my spare time?
21. Am I proud?
22. Do I thank God that I am not as other people?
23. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward or disregard? If so, what am I doing about it?
24. Do I grumble or complain constantly?
25. *Am I an encourager to faith or a discouraging presence to others?*
26. *Do I reprove sin in my sight and in love with meekness, or do I revel in it, laugh at it, and turn a blind eye?*
27. Is Christ real to me?

* *Italicized* questions are slightly reworded additions from the later Methodist rules. See Sources below.

Sources (for reference)

- The Book of Common Prayer, (1662 International Edition, 1928 American, 2019 ACNA)
- [Oxford Methodism](#), The Life of John Wesley, Telford, John (1886).
- [Rules of the Band-Societies](#) (1738).
- [The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies](#) (1743).
- [Directions given to the Band Societies](#) (1744).