

Healthy Rhythms Worksheet

How to establish healthy rhythms in a fast-paced culture

GOD CREATED RHYTHMS

The earth revolves around the sun and turns on its axis. The moon moves through various phases throughout the year. Seasons come and go marked by weather changes.

Those rhythms and changes bring life, health, and stability to life. A disruption or seizing of any of them would often lead to catastrophic consequences.

If the earth's rotation is off, we would either burn or freeze. If the seasons are off, we can lose crops. In the same way, by embracing a life in rhythm, humans can flourish and experience the most growth and health.

When we are not intentional with the rhythms of our closest relationships and personal health, we also suffer, minimize fruitfulness, injure our souls, give up early, miss opportunities, and hurt those around us.

What other rhythms do you notice in creation?

WE ARE SHAPED BY SOCIETY'S RHYTHMS

Companies, schools, governments, and teams also have rhythms that we usually have to submit to: semesters, terms, voting times, tax seasons, sports seasons, etc.

Most people are primarily shaped by the external rhythms of their surroundings - in a way, we are disciplined by the many rhythms other people set for us.

What are the primary rhythms in society that affect your life?

WE CAN LEVERAGE THE POWER OF RHYTHMS

Rhythms can be one of the greatest tools for personal health, fulfillment, and increased impact. In fact, the ability to be shaped by the rhythms we create is perhaps one of the most underutilized gifts from God.

Athletes often understand the power of rhythms. A swimmer leverages it to know when to dive, the speed of strokes, the cadence of breaths, how long to stay under, and when to look up. A marathon runner needs to know when to sprint, when to walk, how to set the right pace, when to hydrate, when to rest in between training...

What are other ways people leverage rhythms?

WE CAN DESIGN OUR RHYTHMS

We get to design our own rhythms, instead of just being influenced by the ones set by others around us. If we don't design it and craft it intentionally, we just get sucked into meaningless cycles and distractions around us.

This is similar to what Jesus describes happens to some - those who receive the Word of God, a gift from Him, but then allow the gift to get crowded out by the worries of life, lure of wealth, and desire for more (Mark 4:19). The worries of life can crowd out the gifts from God.

LEARNING FROM GOD HIMSELF

To find the proper way of operating anything, the best source is always the creator of it. In the beginning, God already set things in rhythm. Not just the universe, but the cadence of human life. For example, the rhythm of resting on the 7th day was modeled by God and is still the cadence of human life.

He also taught our ancestors to craft intentional rhythms by setting calendar dates for festivals of worship, celebrations, and remembrance. Helping people set times of reflecting on God's past faithfulness, times to look forward to God's promises, times to firm up the foundation of their beliefs.

What else did God create in rhythms or seasons?

NOTICE THE PACE AND PRESSURES JESUS OFTEN FACED:

“One time Jesus entered a house, and the crowds began to gather again. Soon he and his disciples **couldn’t even find time to eat.** When his family heard what was happening, they tried to take him away. “He’s out of his mind,” they said. Mark 3:20-21

“Then Jesus said, “Let’s go off by ourselves to a **quiet place and rest awhile.**” He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles **didn’t even have time to eat.**” Mark 6:31

“So John was beheaded in the prison... Later, John’s disciples came for his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus what had happened. As soon as Jesus heard the news, **he left in a boat to a remote area to be alone.** But the crowds heard where he was headed and followed on foot from many towns. Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.” Matthew 14:10-14

What are some of your observations about those passages? Is it ok to be busy? Is it bad to not even have time to eat? How do other people’s perception of our speed affect us?

JESUS’ INTENTIONAL RHYTHMS

It’s obvious Jesus faced more pressures than any of us ever will. He was often very busy, often exhausted, often filled with grief. However, he also had very intentional rhythms of rest, prayer, silence, and space. **These are the rhythms that allowed him to not get burned out by the demands of his ministry and not run from the pressures, but instead to remain healthy in the midst of them.**

“Early the next morning Jesus **went out to an isolated place.** The crowds searched everywhere for him, and when they finally found him, they begged him not to leave them.” Luke 4:42

“But Jesus often **withdrew to the wilderness** for prayer.” Luke 5:16

“One day soon afterward Jesus went **up on a mountain to pray,** and he **prayed to God all night.**” Luke 6:12

HOW TO CREATE RHYTHMS

Knowing how to create rhythms that keep you healthy, even in the midst of busyness and pressure, is one of the most important skills of life. Here are some examples:

RHYTHM	PERSONAL	MARRIAGE	KIDS
DAILY	Scripture Study, Prayer Time, Silence, Exercise	Prayer with Spouse, Daily Recap/Checkin	Family Dinner, Highs and Lows
WEEKLY	Sabbath Rest, Small Group Community	Date Night, Church Together	1-on-1s, Family Night, Pancakes and Jesus
MONTHLY	Mentoring, Spiritual Direction	Review Goals, Review Budget	Review Grades, Age-Appropriate Conversations
SEASONAL	Evaluate physical, spiritual, relational, emotional	Short Getaway, Fun together	Fun Outing or Activity, Include them in trips
YEARLY	Prayer & Planning Retreat	Vacation as a Family	

PERSONAL SPIRITUAL CARE

In a fast-paced environment, the harder we run, the more strategic we must be with planning personal health.

1. **DAILY DEVOTION:** Relationally connect with God with His Word and Prayer. Journal, meditate, memorize, confess sin, speak truth over your life.

Read John 15 - Am I putting God first by making space to abide and hear from Him?

2. **WEEKLY SABBATH:** Dedicate 24 hours a week to resting from ordinary work and doing things that help you delight in God and bring back a sense of wonder in your life.

Read Isaiah 58:13 - Am I consistently working from rest or just resting from work?

3. **MONTHLY MENTORING:** Spend time with someone talking about what has moved you away or toward God. A friend, mentor, coach, counselor, a Spiritual Director.

Read Proverbs 27:17 - Have I invited someone to consistently speak into my growth?

4. **SEASONAL REFLECTION:** Reflect on how your soul is doing - any changes need to be made with rhythms, meeting structures, work hours...? Evaluate your health buckets:

- Emotional - Have you properly grieved the changes that happened this season? Feeling depleted?
- Physical - Exercising enough? Sleeping well? Do your eating habits need to change?
- Relational - Time for healthy friendships? Meeting with a small group? Make space for intimacy?
- Spiritual - Hearing from God? Spiritual practices fresh? Is God first in your day?

Read Luke 10:27 - How is the health of my soul, mind, body, and heart?

5. **ANNUAL RETREAT:** Get away to seek God and plan your year in light of His will. A theme, focus, or word for the year.

Read Luke 4:42, 5:16, 6:12, 9:10, 18, 28 - Am I withdrawing from life's busyness enough in order to connect with God and refuel my inner life?

PROFESSIONAL HEALTH

In order to stay healthy with your work, we recommend you pay close attention to the following principles and reflection questions:

Plan your days off - It is your responsibility to plan and take your days off. Most employers do not expect you to work in such a way that is unsustainable or damaging to your soul.

- Are you resting at least one full day a week?
- Are you planning your seasonal vacations and time off?

Trade days off - If an event or initiative requires you to work extra hours or days in a specific week, please take an extra day off the following week in order to properly rest.

- Is there a push week coming up that you should plan an extra day off afterwards?

Set boundaries – Make sure that your supervisor and co-workers know your preferred ways of communicating and any boundaries you have set in place to stay healthy. For example, what times they can text you, when you check Slack, what qualifies as urgent?

- Have you set clear boundaries in order to keep home/work life in healthy rhythm?
- Have you communicated your boundaries to your boss and co-workers?

Make a prayer shield – Build a team of up to 5-10 trusted people that commit to being your personal intercessors. Send them specific ways to pray for you - praying for power and protection.

- Do I have people committed to regularly praying for me and my family?

MARRIAGE TIPS

Evening prayer – Try developing a habit of praying together every night before going to sleep. Not only does God move when we pray, but it's a way for us to clear things up before ending the day. It's hard to pray together if you have unresolved conflict.

Consistent date nights – Date nights are intentional face-to-face time and are one of the best ways for couples to improve communication and build intimacy. If you have kids, try rotating babysitting with close friends or try mid-day dates.

Time trade-offs – If you have to work or be away for extra hours for several days in a row because of work or life's demands, arrange ahead of time for you to have special family time the week following, so there's something for them to look forward to.

Pre-planning getaways and vacations – Consider taking time in the beginning of each year to pre-plan a Spring and a Fall romantic getaway (no kids) and a fun family vacation during the Summer. It's a great way to get refreshed after a busy season.

Sharing spiritual experiences – Taking time seasonally to reflect and share your personal spiritual experiences is one of the best tools for increased intimacy. Try serving together with the church, reading books, going to conferences, and sharing with each other what He is teaching you in Scripture.

Dinner club – Form a monthly dinner club with 2-4 other couples and commit together to rotate hosting a special home-made dinner at each other's homes. The couple that hosts is responsible for preparation, hosting, and cleaning when their month is up. The goal is fun, relationship building, and connection.

Good home habits – The home can be a sacred space, if designed that way. For this to happen, it's important to be strategic with when to work in front of family and when to put your stuff away. Here are some tips:

- Don't walk into your home while on the phone. When you walk in, put the phone away.
- If you need to work, wait until the kids are in bed before getting your laptop out.
- Strive to have 11 segments of work in your week. If you are working 3 segments one day, take an extra segment to rest another day.
- Eat at least one meal a day with the entire family with no media around.

TRAINING

How to plan a prayer retreat

It's a great habit to once or twice a year get away to seek God and plan your year in light of His will. Seek God for a theme, focus, or word for the year or new season. Here are some tips for making the most of this time:

1. CHOOSE A LOCATION.

Pick a place that you think you'll be able to enjoy time alone with God. Some people enjoy the outdoors, so camping would work well. Some prefer retreat centers, hotels, Airbnb homes, etc.

Here are some Bay Area recommendations:

- [Mount Hermon Christian Retreat Center](#)
- [Prayer & Fasting Mountain in Scotts Valley](#)
- [New Camaldoli Hermitage](#), Monk Center in Big Sur (silent retreat)
- [The Jesuit Retreat Center](#), Los Altos

2. PREPARE TO RECEIVE.

Seek God before-hand asking Him to lean your heart toward what He wants to speak to you about on your time away. Ask for some seeds to be deposited in your soul, which He may water during your time of prayer away. A verse, a concept, a word.

Maybe in your devotional time leading up to the retreat the concept of “rest” or “worship” or “Spirit” stands out to you. God might be speaking to you about areas to dive deeper into.

3. ASK OTHERS TO PRAY.

Build a prayer team. Ask them to commit to praying for you daily. If you already have an idea of what you’ll be focusing on, share it with them.

4. CLEAR YOUR MIND.

Resolve any unresolved conflict. Try to clear your inbox and finish big projects if possible. You want to start your retreat with a clear conscience and focused mind.

5. BUY/PACK THE BASICS.

Treat yourself well and buy simple foods, snacks, drinks that you can enjoy in your time with Jesus. Consider bringing a candle (explained below), portable speaker, etc.

6. BE FULLY PRESENT.

Do one thing at a time. Make a commitment to be fully present in every activity. Learn to enjoy, to commune, and worship God in every simple act: cooking, dressing, showering, eating, drinking. No multitasking, just be present and enjoy the good things God gave you.

Smell the coffee before you drink it. Taste every bite of food. Breathe deep remembering every breath is from Him. Look for beauty. “Whatever you do, do it for the glory of God.”

7. ENGAGE ALL YOUR SENSES.

- **Bring a scented candle.** Light it during your times of communion with God. Later on, the scent will bring you back to your time here.

- **Select a new worship album** to download. Worship with fresh songs. Let the music mark your time away. Similar to the first song a bride and groom dance to on their wedding day, this album will forever bring your heart back to the moments you'll have with God.
- **Bring a journal** or ways to record what God will speak to you about. Some people love to draw, to paint, to write... Plan your way of recording God's words to you.
- **Bring a Bible and other study material.** I like bringing at least one study Bible that helps me go deeper into subjects that God stirs in my heart.

8. PLAN THE BIG ROCKS FOR THE YEAR.

One of the benefits of getting away and spending focused time in prayer is the time you have to make plans in light of what you hear God is speaking to you about. Design your year, instead of just letting time pass with no meaning. Here are some categories to plan for:

- Vacations with family and getaways with spouse
- Prayer retreats
- Books to read, mentors to pursue
- A word for the year
- Groups to lead, people to disciple
- Goals for developing your family
- Professional goals, financial goals

9. TRY NEW SPIRITUAL PRACTICES.

- Worship with song after each meal - playing the album you selected
- Go on prayer walks - enjoying the nature and beauty around you
- Sit in silence - paying attention to God's presence in you - be with Him.
- Pray on your knees, pray standing, pray loud and quietly.
- Practice hearing from God, and write down what you sense Him saying.