

"Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

"Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?"

"Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?"

"Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?"

"Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?"

## "I will, with God's help."



What does it mean to be a Christian as an Episcopalian?

So how do we live all of these promises?

How do we stay tethered to our identity as baptized believers?

How do we stay tethered to "God's help?"

And how to do we invite our people to find their identity in Christ and live lives of love?



## We live as disciples.

**Disciple:** One who follows a discipline and structure designed for ultimate liberation.

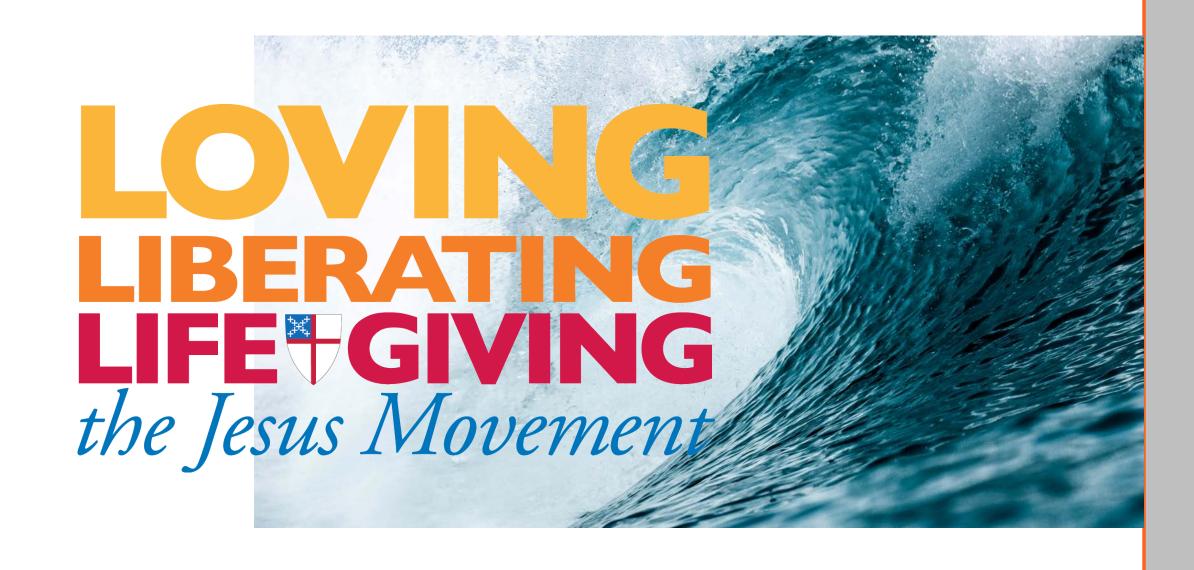
Jesus' disciples were in the discipline of being Jesus, not just like him, but him.

All disciplines, of any long standing, have mastery of that discipline, the last stage of which is to set the discipline aside, and live it as you.

i.e.

To live and move and have your being in...





WE SEEK LOVE To know God's love, to love and be loved by others, and to love ourselves

WE SEEK FREEDOM From the many forces — sin, fear, oppression, and division that pull us from living as God created us to be: dignified, whole, and free.

WE SEEK ABUNDANT LIFE Overflowing with joy, peace, generosity, and delight. Where there is enough for all because we all share with abandon. A life of meaning, given back to God and lived for others.

WE SEEK JESUS The way of Jesus is the Way of Love, and that way has the power to change lives and change the world.

As the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement, we follow the Way of Jesus. His way is the Way of Love, and that love has the power to change lives and change the world.



## THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Summary of spiritual inventory findings of RenewalWorks: A Ministry of Forward Movement

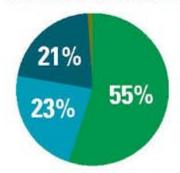
200 RENEWALWORKS CONGREGATIONS

**12,000** EPISCOPALIANS

47% OF THESE CHURCHES HAVE 101-250 PARISHIONERS

**54%** OF RESPONDENTS HAVE ATTENDED THEIR CHURCH 10+ YEARS

THREE PRIMARY CHURCH ARCHETYPES



**Troubled:** Restless and hungry for greater spiritual growth.

Extroverted: Committed to service, mission, and outreach; limited correlation between service and spiritual beliefs.

**Complacent:** Low expectations of transformation, and resistance to change and challenge.

# WHAT WE HEAR BY THE NUMBERS

**60%** want the church to help them develop a relationship with God in Christ.

**57%** percent want to be challenged to grow and take next steps spiritually.

Only **14%** of the 12,000 respondents say they reflect on scripture daily.



Only **42%** are extremely satisfied or very satisfied with the way their church helps them develop a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Only **38%** felt they were extremely or very satisfied with how the church challenged them to grow and take next steps.

**42%** have never met with members of their church clergy individually, and **48%** have never talked with a spiritual mentor.

#### WHERE ARE WE SPIRITUALLY? THE FOUR STAGES OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

#### **EXPLORING**

GROWING

**→ DEEPENING** 

CENTERED

Affirmed belief in God, though not sure what faith claims they would make about Christ. Generally, faith is not significant in their day-to-day life.

They are committed to the Christian faith but still have many questions and have not developed a personal relationship with God in Christ. Transition to value a personal relationship with God over their church membership. They feel close to Christ and depend on him daily for guidance.

A personal relationship with God in Christ is the most important relationship in their lives, but that doesn't mean their spiritual journey is over.

18%

55%

23%

4%

72%

Consider themselves to be at an early, less mature stage of spiritual growth. Parishioners that fall into the first two stages are highly dependent on the church—and specifically the clergy—to help teach, guide and mentor.

# FOUR CATALYSTS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

- 1. Engagement with scripture
- 2. Transforming power of the Eucharist
- 3. A deeper prayer life
- 4. The heart of the leader

RenewalWorks™ A Ministry of Forward Movement

Download the full report:

RenewalWorks: What We're Learning

www.RenewalWorks.org

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Why Spiritual Growth Matters....



How do we equip people to:

Live baptized?

Seek abundant life, freedom, and love?

Grow as disciples of Christ?

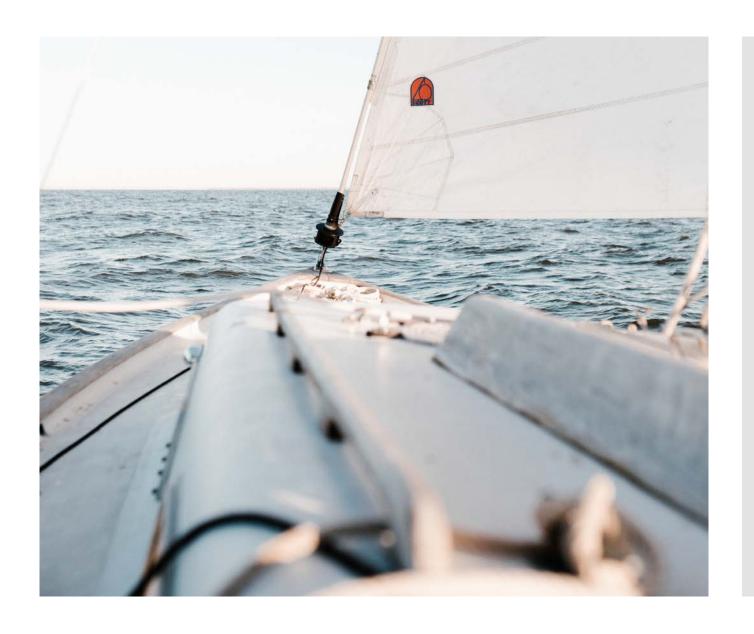
To live and move have their being in Jesus?



## RULE OF LIFE

Staying the course of a baptized life

The idea of a "rule of life" comes from the Latin word regula and suggests a way to regulate or regularize our lives to stay on an intentional path. A rule of life is not just a set of rules to live by; rather, it is a gentle framework to guide life with God. A way to approach living daily life in ordinary and extraordinary circumstances.



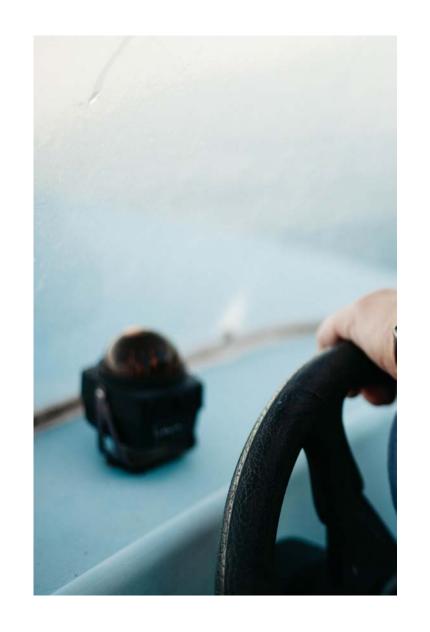
• A rule of life allows us to live with intention and purpose in the present moment. It helps us stay the course on our most important values, relationships, dreams, and work.

• A rule of life is meant to be simple, realistic, flexible, and achievable. It is a purposeful tool to help us grow as our life changes, expands and contracts.

Everyone has a Rule of Life.

Some are intentional, some are not. But we all live by a certain set of practices. A set of actions that re-enforce our values.

The question for the baptized is this:
"Is my rule of life, my set of practices, is it bringing me closer to Christ? Is it bringing the love of God alive in my life in a way that is unique to who I was created to be?

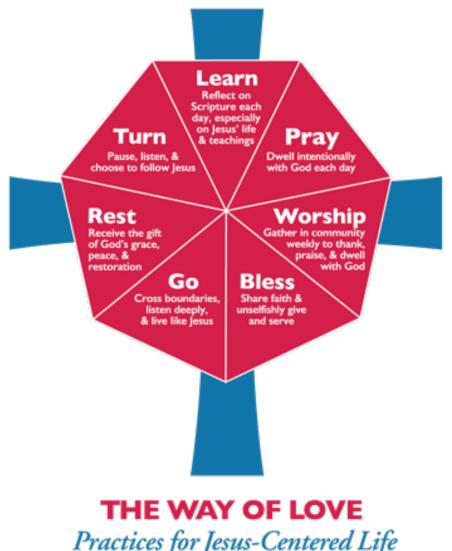


The question for faith communities are these:

"Is our rule of life as an organization bringing us closer to Christ as a body? Is it bringing the Good News alive in our community? AND Are we using our unique gifts to help people develop their own rule of life practices so that they can live out their baptismal covenant in a way that is unique to them? Is it helping us with discipleship?



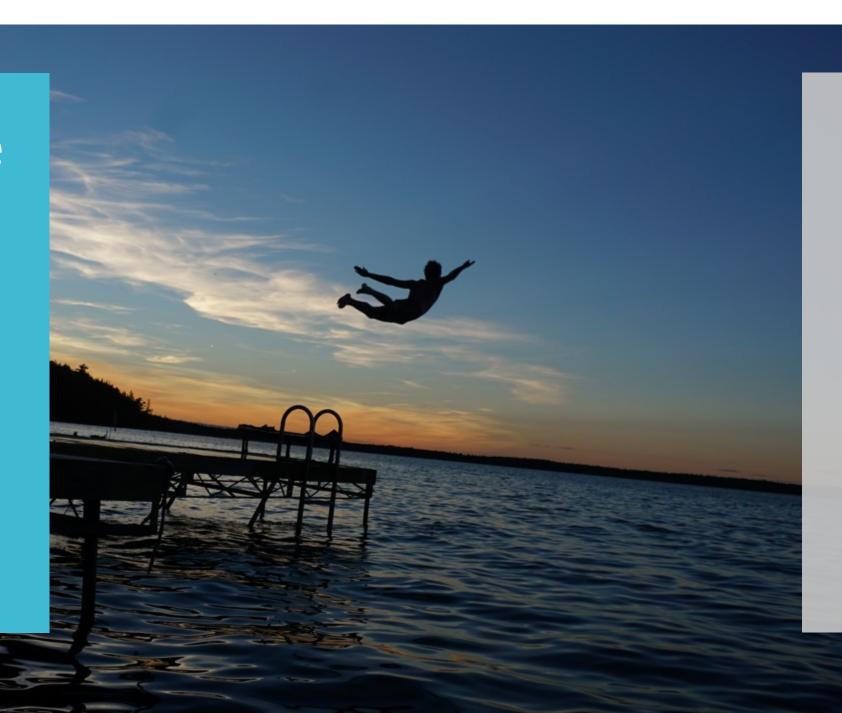
The Way of Love was created to help all of us – no matter what season of life we are in, what age we are, what role we function to live a life drenched by our Baptismal promises, learning how to live and move and have our being in Jesus.



Practices for Jesus-Centered Life

Let's dive into the Way of Love

a Rule of Life for living a Jesus-centered life.



Receive the gift of God's grace, peace, and restoration.

#### **TURN**

Pause, listen, and choose to follow Jesus.

## **PRAY**

Dwell intentionally with God each day.

#### **LEARN**

Reflect on Scripture each day,

#### **BLESS**

Share faith and unselfishly give and serve.

#### **WORSHIP**

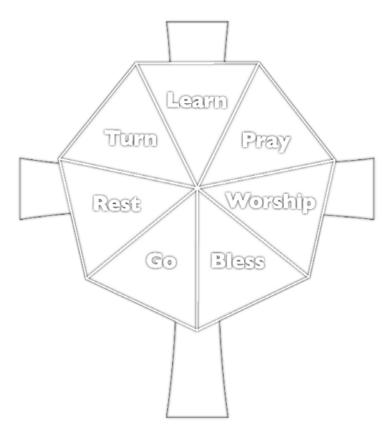
Gather in community weekly to thank, praise, and dwell with God.

#### GO

Cross boundaries, listen deeply and live like Jesus.

### How **We** Practice

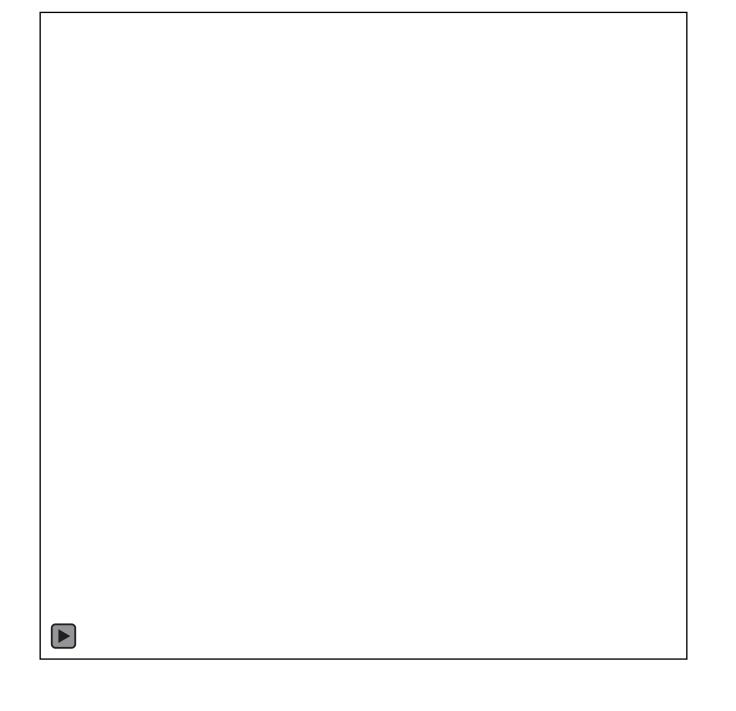
- Draw the cross or number
   on your sheet.
- 2. Then, fill the triangle with all the ways your community engages each of the practices.



THE WAY OF LOVE

Practices for Jesus-Centered Life







Receive the gift of God's grace, peace, and restoration.

From the beginning, God established the sacred pattern of labor and rest. God invites us to dedicate time for restoration and wholeness - within our bodies, minds, and souls, and within our communities and institutions.



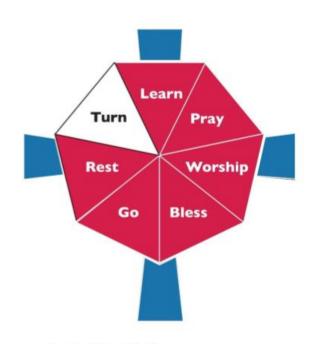
• As a child, what was your favorite way to play? Share through pantomime and then words.



•What is your "resting soul rate"? What does it feel like? What do you need to create good resting health?

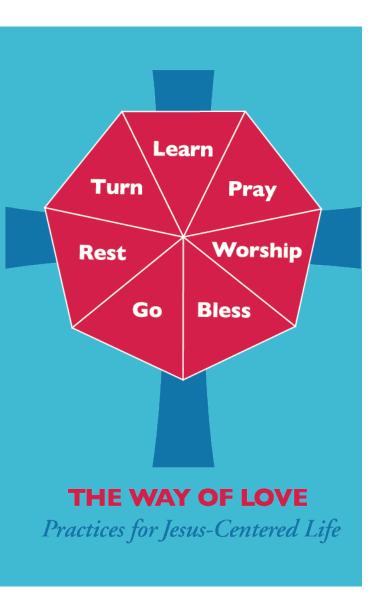


•What practices or habits would help you to practice Rest more often?

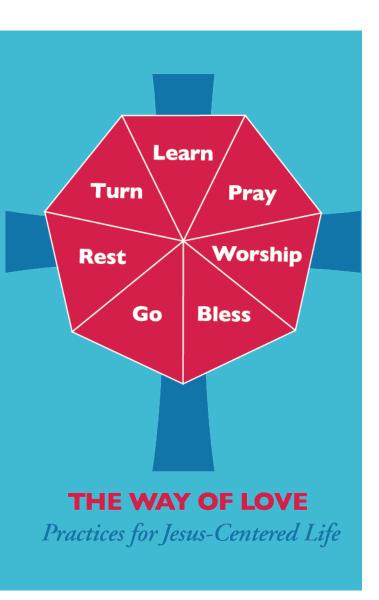


#### Pause, listen, and choose to follow Jesus.

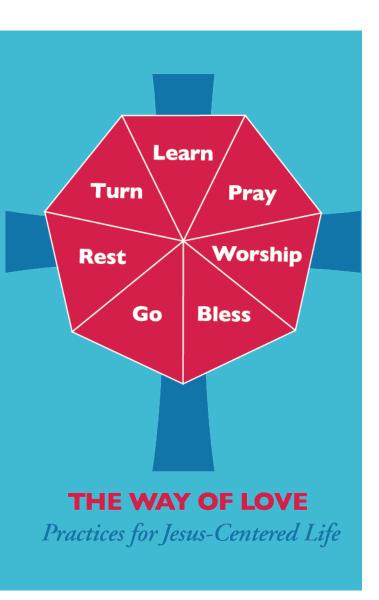
Like the disciples, we are called by Jesus to follow the Way of Love. With God's help, we can turn from the powers of sin, hatred, fear, injustice, and oppression toward the way of truth, love, hope, justice, and freedom. In turning, we reorient our lives to Jesus Christ, falling in love again, again,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



• Tell a story about a time you changed your mind. What did it take to change your mind? What happened after you changed your mind?



•Share your baptism story. What part of the baptism covenant is the most challenging to you?



•What can you add or subtract from your life in order to practice Turn more fully?



#### Dwell intentionally with God each day.

Jesus teaches us to come before God with our whole selves. Whether alone or in a group, aloud or in silence, listening for God or praying for others, when we pray we invite and dwell in God's loving presence.



What is your favorite way to pray?



•What stands in the way of a more active and consistent prayer life?



•What could you add or subtract to practice a fuller prayer life?



#### **WORSHIP**

Gather in community weekly to thank, praise, and dwell with God.

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. By the power of the Spirit, we are made into the body Christ.



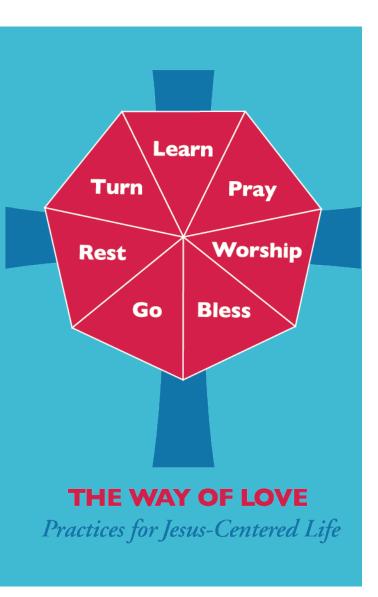
## **WORSHIP**

• What is your favorite Sunday or other service of the Church year? Why?



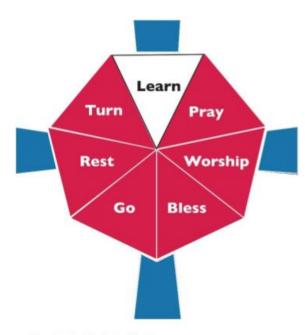
## WORSHIP

•How has your life been changed by Worship? Can you mark a moment that was transformative?



## **WORSHIP**

•What could you add or subtract to allow space for your to experience Worship more fully?



Reflect on Scripture each day, especially on Jesus' life and teachings.

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 see God's story and activity in everyday life.



•What are the stumbling blocks for your reading/studying of the bible?



 What is your favorite passage/story of Scripture? Why? How has it changed you?



•What could you add or subtract to make reading scripture a more regular part of your life?



#### Share faith and unselfishly give and serve.

Jesus called his disciples to give, forgive, teach, and heal in his name. We are empowered by the Spirit to bless everyone we meet, to practice generosity and compassion, and to proclaim the Good News with hopeful words and selfless actions.



•Who was the first person who told you about Jesus? How did they tell you?

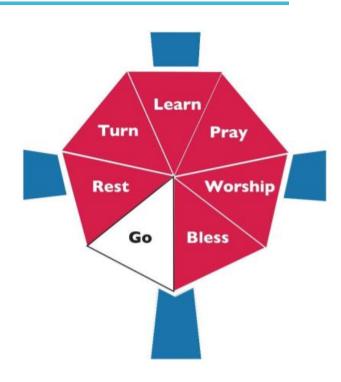


Share a story of a hard moment or experience.

Who helped you through that experience? What attributes of God did they show?



• What practices or support do you need to practice bless, sharing and inviting stories your faith more boldly (but not rudely)?

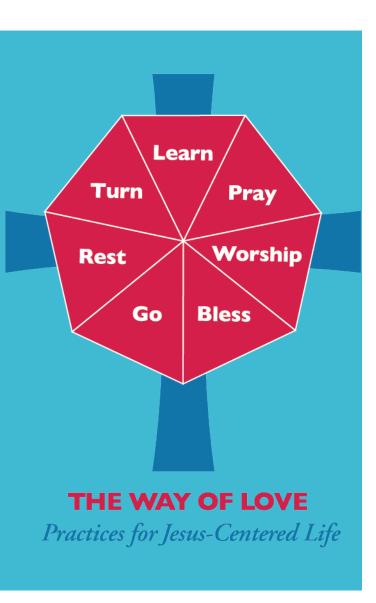


#### Cross boundaries, listen deeply and live like Jesus.

As Jesus went to the highways and byways, he sends us beyond comfort, across difference and division, to witness to the love, justice, and truth of God with our lips and with our lives. We go, listen with humility and join God in healing a hurting world.



•Who is your most unlikely friend? How did you become friends?



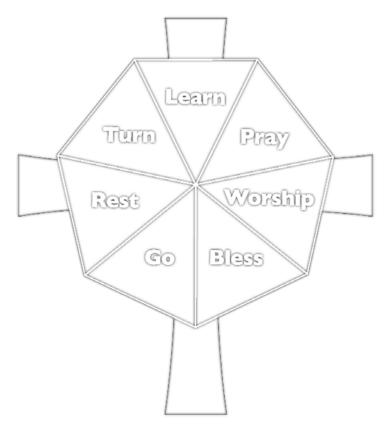
•What scares you most about crossing boundaries?



 What do you need to add or subtract in order to more boldly practice Go?

#### How I Practice

- 1. Write one of the practices in each of the triangles.
- 2. Then, fill the triangle with all the ways you engage each of the practices.



THE WAY OF LOVE

Practices for Jesus-Centered Life



# Consider a Small Group

## Why Discipleship in Small (HOME) Groups?

- 1.People need to feel safe enough to take off their mask of pretense
- 2.People need to be freed from the perversion of time
- 3. People need to feel wanted

When these three things happen, we have the space to move from the head down into the heart experience, which can takes us from knowing *about* the love of Christ, to *knowing* the love of Christ. When we know the love of Christ, we are more likely to share the love of Christ, practicing the One-anothers, which helps to eradicate aloneness.

ALSO: Two basic tenets of adult education are that adults learn best when they are involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction, and that adults are most motivated to learn when the subject has immediate relevance and impact in their lives. Small Groups are innately set up to be member-led.

## How to practice the Way of Love in Small Groups

#### Learn:

Book Studies that look at books of the bible

African Bible Study

Lectio

Small Group Curriculum

Turn — Re-orient yourselves away from your to-do list and towards God and each other. Open your time together with a moment of silence or spoken gratefulness.

Worship – Incorporate something like Compline or Evening Prayer or other liturgies into your meeting.

**Prayer** - Offer a practice of prayer – intercession, healing, or contemplative in each meeting.

Bless – Make time to share stories of where you are seeing or experiencing God at work - in your life, in the lives of those around you or in the world.

GO – Throughout the year make plans to serve and listen others as a group.

Rest – Build in moments or occasion to play and relax as a group.

Jesus' way is the way of love. In him we find more love, freedom and abundant life. You are invited to turn toward Jesus and to commit to follow his Way of Love in the context of Christian community, trusting in his power to change each of our lives and to change this world. After each bidding, all who desire to make this commitment should join in proclaiming: By the Spirit's power, we will.



Leader: Will you turn and center your life on Jesus, falling in love with our Lord again and again?

People: By the Spirit's power, we will.

**Leader:** Will you ground your life in the life and teachings of Jesus, as revealed in scripture? And will you pray and simply listen for God's voice in your life and in the world?

People: By the Spirit's power, we will.

**Leader:** Will you gather together in worship, to break bread and to thank and praise God? And will you bless this world with your story, your resources, and your labor?

People: By the Spirit's power, we will.

**Leader:** Will you cross boundaries and fearlessly become God's Beloved Community? And will you take rest, receiving God's gift of grace and restoration, and letting God be God?

People: By the Spirit's power, we will

**Leader:** May the God who formed all things in Love, draw you near to God's own heart, empower you by the power of the Spirit to live the Way of Love with fellow travelers, and send you to participate in the resurrection and healing of God's world. And may the blessing of our Lord – loving, liberating and life-giving – be with us and remain with us forever and ever. **All: Amen.**