



Week of November 26, 2018: Committing to a Rule of Life

Discussion Questions Set #1

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Romans 12:2)

In our service, we learned from Daniel 1 about Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah – likely better known as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. We learned how they were removed from their Israelite land and culture and “enrolled” in a Babylonian assimilation program. The reality of this program was to accomplish one goal – to eliminate Israelite men’s distinctiveness as followers of the God of Israel and assimilate them into the values of Babylonian culture. We learned that they resisted by ascribing to a “rule of life” – a pattern of life that enabled the values of Israel, and God Himself, to be reinforced in their lives. It is important that we understand that we too live in a world that seeks to eliminate our distinctiveness as followers of Jesus.

1. How do you think ascribing to a “rule of life” enables one to resist attempts to eliminate one’s distinctiveness?
2. Have you ever experienced our culture’s attempts at stripping us of our distinctiveness as followers of Jesus? Describe what this experience was like? How did you resist this?
3. What patterns of behaviour are present in your life right now that might assist you in resisting the assimilation our culture seeks?

Discussion Questions Set #2

In service, we learned that the word “rule” is related to the ancient Greek word for “trellis”. Trellises are designed to help plants grow upward and become fruitful. Our rule of life, then, is designed to help us grow upwards in relationship with God and to become more fruitful in the good we produce for the world around us. It provides a structure that orients and encourages our growth.

1. Sometimes, we buck at the idea of rules/patterns of behaviour associated with our faith. We often struggle with the concept of employing traditions in our following of Jesus. Is this something you’ve experienced? Explain. Why do you think some of us react this way to the thought of rules/patterns in our faith?
2. How might a “rule of life” actually assist us in growing upward and becoming more fruitful?
3. How might each of the following be acts of rebellion against our culture?:
 - A daily office or pattern of devotions
 - A weekly Sabbath
 - A life of simplicity
 - A focus on community



Discussion Questions Set #3

“By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done”. (Genesis 2:2-3)

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God ...For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” (Exodus 20:8-11)

1. Adhering to a weekly Sabbath – a day of rest – is a seemingly difficult one for many followers of Jesus. Why do you think this is such a challenge for us?
2. How might recognizing the following aims of a weekly Sabbath encourage us to better keep this commandment?
 - Sabbath-rest is meant to enable us to engage more fully WITH God.
 - Sabbath-rest obviously involves rest, kind of like taking a deep breath.
 - Sabbath-rest is meant to enable us to delight in God and his incredible creation.
 - Sabbath-rest is to create space for us to actually interact with God on a deeply personal level.