

The Parish of Chorley, Saint Laurence

In the Church of England Diocese of Blackburn



Rhythm of Life

We hope you will find our *Rhythm of Life* useful in your growth as a Christian. Some people refer to this as a Rule of Life but, despite its title, our *Rhythm of Life* is not a set of instructions, but a framework of suggestions to help our growth in faith.

The key to it all is being open to God and establishing and deepening a relationship with Jesus.

Naturally, we are all different, and have our own unique way of following and responding to God's call. God made us as we are, and our offering is our own special way of responding to the divine invitation.

There are three strands to this approach.

The first of our three stands is

"Encountering Christ in the Scriptures"

which sounds quite a big task – how do we begin? If we are comfortable with books, apart from the Bible itself, there are many helps in approaching this, including several small booklets of "Daily Readings" which offer short passages and explanations, such as...

These days many people prefer screens and websites to books, and, again, there is a range of electronic guides to help us on our way as well as some audio resources. Searches through items under "daily prayer, "scripture guides," or the like will also open up Scripture to us.

From time to time the church will offer periods of Bible Study in small groups to help our understanding.

Whichever is our chosen way of exploring the Bible and becoming comfortable with it, we will begin to get a sense of who Jesus is and what he says – which is as relevant to us now, as to his own contemporaries.

Looking more widely into the Bible we may encounter the very "human" language of the Psalms as the authors express their own feelings in a natural way; how far can we identify with them?

Maybe, if we prefer pictures to words, we will begin to conjure up for ourselves a picture of how Jesus was. Some of the famous paintings of the great artists can show us, and "bring to life" the incidents and events of Jesus' life, in a remarkable way.

Furthermore, we may be led to make our own expressions of what Jesus was like – maybe following the masters of the Eastern Church by "writing" Icons, which are a very symbolic visual manner of exploring what faith means.

Deepening our relationship with Christ through prayer is the next part of our Christian growth. There are many ways of praying, and types of prayer, but most importantly prayer is a way of establishing and developing our relationship with God. As we are all "differently gifted" each of us will have our own way of approaching this.

It has been said that we should "pray as we can, and not as we can't." This sounds a bit strange, but it reminds us that we are all different and growing in prayer will be "our prayer", and not someone else's!

Some of us might be led to music and song to express ourselves – either alone or in choirs. Others may prefer a regular or structured way of offering words, as in a daily office or liturgy, such as is followed in church worship, or followed alone.

There will be those who are drawn to silent forms of prayer, with time for reflection. Forms of meditation have been used by Christians throughout the generations, as well as by those from other religions.

By all means try these various approaches to prayer, and in the end you will “pray as you can and not as you can’t”!

Many ways of praying can be practiced in small groups, in which we can support and encourage one another as brothers and sisters.

Serving Christ’s world and serving one another.

Whichever way our unique personality draws us- words, music, beauty, nature, or just silence, we may become more conscious, not just of our own needs, but the needs of others. Recognizing, as our relationship with God through Jesus deepens, that this world and our own neighbours are God’s creations, and that God has entrusted us with their care, we will begin to ask what we might do. Can our own God-given skills and insights draw us into serving others? With what responsibility towards the world and its occupants is God drawing us? What opportunities are there in our church or neighbourhood to join in God’s work, and at the same time, our relationship with the One who calls us?

Finally...

You are not alone. The task of our clergy and ministers is to help people journey in their faith and become disciples of the Lord Jesus. Members of the Ministry Team are available at all times for conversations and encouragement about your faith journey. The Church is a community, and there will be various opportunities to share with each other, and uphold one another in our growth and discipleship – just keep in touch, and we can grow and serve together!



*Almighty God,
you have given your Holy Spirit to the Church
to lead us into all truth:
bless with the Spirit’s grace and presence
the members of this parish;
keep us steadfast in faith and united in love,
that we may manifest your glory
and prepare the way of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

Some suggestions for each of the three strands

(though you may find others that are helpful)

Scripture

BIOY: <https://www.bibleinoneyear.org/>

With Bible In One Year each day you will receive a Psalm or Proverbs reading, a New Testament reading and an Old Testament reading. It also provides daily audio and written commentary to walk you through each day's reading, to provide fresh understanding of the texts.

Prayer

Daily Prayer (a liturgical resource): <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>

Daily Prayer is available free as an app or on the Church of England Website and gives complete services for Morning, Evening and Night Prayer in both contemporary (Common Worship) and traditional (Book of Common Prayer) forms.

Serving Christ's world and serving one another

At the current time, there are many small but important ways that we can serve Christ's people. It may be that you can help delivering food parcels to those who are needy, or make a regular donation to the local foodbank. If you are unable to leave the house, you may want to offer your help to the Chorley Buddies scheme which is, among other things, keeping in touch with people via telephone calls. There are many practical ways that Christian service can be exercised in our local community.

Not sure?

If you feel a rhythm would help you, particularly at the current time, but you are not sure what would suit you best, or are a bit overwhelmed by all the options, then please do speak to a member of the Ministry Team who would love to have a conversation with you and help you to work out what would best suit you.

Other suggestions which you may wish to explore

Daily reflections on the lectionary readings

<https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/apps/reflections-for-daily-prayer>

A visual approach to scripture

<https://thevcs.org/>

Prayer and contemplation

<https://teaandtheology.org/prayer-and-worship/>

Praying with poetry

<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/praying-with-poetry/>

Lectio 365: <https://www.24-7prayer.com/dailydevotional>

Lectio 365 is a devotional resource that helps you pray the Bible every day and is inspired by Lectio Divina, a way of meditating on the Bible that's been used by Christians for centuries. Written by leaders from the 24-7 Prayer movement, and produced in partnership with CWR, this resource helps you engage with Scripture to inspire prayer.

Sacred Space: www.sacredspace.ie

Sacred Space is inspired by the spirituality of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, and gives a thought for the day, a daily Bible passage and some guided reflections.

Bible Podlets: <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/podcasts/bible-podlets/>

Bible Podlets is a Bible study and discussion podcast for primary aged children to do with adults. Each episode has fun games/activities, an engaging Bible reading in the form of a news story and deep discussion with places to pause and talk together about the topic. Discussion notes are available to download from the Resource Area of the website.

Off the Shelf: Blackburn Diocese Board of Education Facebook page

In light of the Covid-19 outbreak, the Board of Education have come together to produce a new series of collective worship that can be used at home or school called #OffTheShelf. Through this you can join a member of the team in their study, where they will lead you in a short act of collective worship using resources off their shelf!

Engage at Home: <https://engageworship.org/engage-at-home-daily-family-prayer-and-worship-activities>

Engage at Home has been created by Engage Worship to resource families to strengthen family worship and prayer. Each day includes a simple prayer or worship activity using movement, interaction, craft, play and more.