



Introducing the Dream 'Rhythm of Life'

- nurturing a way of life centred on Jesus -

"...Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." (Matthew 11:30)

Within the Dream network, some people have decided to commit themselves to a shared *Rhythm of Life*. A way of life built around practices that have been central to followers of Jesus down the centuries.

Jesus' summary of the most important commandments gives our rhythm its shape, with six areas that we devote ourselves to.

Jesus said, "The first in importance is, 'Listen, Israel: The Lord your God is one; so love the Lord God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy.' And here is the second: 'Love others as well as you love yourself.' There is no other commandment that ranks with these."
(Mark 12:29-31)

We devote ourselves to loving God with all our passion.

The core practice that aligns our passion with God is worship. Worship is about giving value. It re-orders our priorities. Worship includes coming together to praise God, but ultimately flows from the way we order our everyday lives, including the way we use our time, money and abilities.

We devote ourselves to loving God with all our prayer

Prayer begins with simply becoming aware of the presence of God. Out of that flows thanking, praising, confessing, asking and listening to God. Personal and group rhythms of connecting with the presence of God in our daily lives are essential to going deeper in our spirituality.

We devote ourselves to loving God with all our intelligence

The scriptures have always been central to the spiritual growth of the people of God. We need the discipline of regularly connecting with scripture, getting to know it, and more importantly letting it get to know us. This is devotional reading where we let the bible's story shape the story of our own lives. Studying the world around us, and engaging with ideas and culture can then also become ways to love God with our minds.

We devote ourselves to loving God with all our energy

Loving God with our energy is the spiritual discipline of service. That simply means getting stuck in and getting our hands dirty as an offering of love to God. We can serve God through serving our communities, the poor and marginalised, the environment, Dream or our local church as well as in our own workplace, homes and families.

We devote ourselves to loving others

The call of Jesus on his followers to love others isn't primarily about feelings of affection, it's a radical commitment to outward looking kindness through...

Generosity: Actively taking the initiative to honestly share our lives and our faith.

Hospitality: To those who come to us.

Compassion: Caring for those in need and working for justice and reconciliation.

We devote ourselves to loving ourselves

We are responsible to take care of ourselves. That includes investing in our own growth, enjoying rest, receiving and offering forgiveness, and taking time to simply 'be with God' as well as to 'do for God'.

A Shared yet flexible commitment

The Dream Rhythm of Life is a shared commitment to these six areas. Within that overall commitment, those who take it on create a personal plan of how it will work out practically for them in the year ahead. This aims to bring together

Grace: so we start with confidence that we are utterly loved and accepted without doing anything

Realism: so that we each take into account our own life circumstances, temperament and spiritual journey.

Faith: so that we seek to be stretched and grown in each area.

A Process

Everyone connected with Dream is invited to consider whether taking on the Dream Rhythm of Life is for them. Many may already have something similar or not be helped by this approach, which is fine. The network as a whole will still be enriched as some within it take on a personal commitment, while others can support and encourage them in it.

If you think this may be for you, then there are four stages...

1. Retreat: For those who are considering the Rhythm of life for the first time, we'll offer a day retreat with some simple input on each of the six areas, as well as time for personal reflection. From this reflection you can start you create your own personal plan of action.

2. Connect: A central part of the rhythm will be having someone who is there to support you in it. This mentor will meet with you regularly (at least once a term) to encourage and support you in your commitment. They will play an important role in working with you as you put together your personal plan for the ways the overall rhythm will work practically in your own life. You can find that person yourself or we have a group of people within Dream who are available to take that role. Having a small group of people with whom to honestly share your life and pray together is also likely to be vital for most people.

3. Commit: Once a year, during lent, we'll have a network gathering where those who wish to commit to the rhythm for the following year do so. We'd also love to have many others from across the network who aren't taking on the Rhythm of life there too, to pray for and support those who are.

4. Review: Each year, you'll be encouraged to review both whether you wish to continue with the Rhythm of life, and to re-assess what it will look like practically in your own life.

Resources

This Rhythm will only be useful if we invest in it. We're planning to include the following resources

Retreats: For those who are considering committing to the rhythm for the first time or for those who are re-assessing their commitment.

Reflection: We'll be working to have some simple sheets with a basic introduction to each practise in the rhythm, together with reflective questions to help create a personal plan for the year ahead.

Support: A one-to-one coach to support and encourage you in your commitment. This may or may not be someone within the Dream Network.

Tools: We'll keep adding tools to resource spiritual growth, especially via the website. Anyone can share any tool that they are finding helpful, and there are a number of ongoing central tools such as Dream Lectio.

"...Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out."
(Romans 12:1)

The Next Step

If you have any questions, or would like to come on the next retreat in order to explore whether the Dream 'Rhythm of Life' is for you, then contact **Richard** via richard@dream.uk.net or **07989 312758**