



The Emmaus Community

Rhythm and Rule of Life

Prayer

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" —Luke 24:30–32

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. —1 Thess. 5:16–18

As a community, before all else, we are called to root ourselves in a life of prayer. Jesus modelled a life of prayer, and his followers have been instructed to pray without ceasing. The Emmaus Community thus commits to being immersed in prayer which is both personal and collective, active and contemplative.

Our vow calls us to have regular personal prayer, which includes times of silence and scripture study—as well as to join with the community in times of common prayer.

Our hope is that our times of prayer will cause our hearts to burn as we encounter Christ in the breaking open of scripture, in prayer (including confession, intercession and gratitude), and in the breaking of bread through the celebration of the Eucharist / Communion.

We recognize that our life of common prayer engages tradition and innovation, creativity and ongoing study. We also recognize that these times of prayer will guide us in seeking reconciliation with God, each other, the neighbourhood, the stranger, and all of creation.

As outward signs of our vow we will creatively and prayerfully strive to:

- live a rhythm of prayer which will include daily personal prayer and shared morning and evening community times of prayer.
- devote ourselves to reading and reflecting on scripture moving us from Gospel to life and life to Gospel.
- practice gratitude, seek forgiveness, and pray for each other, the neighbourhood, and the concerns of the Church, city and world.
- regularly celebrate Communion / Eucharist together, recognizing that Jesus is made known in the breaking of the bread.
- seek out regular times of silence and stillness to listen to and for God.
- proclaim our trust and dependence on God through taking a weekly Sabbath.
- take a personal silent retreat once per year.
- share in at least one community retreat or pilgrimage per year.
- have a spiritual mentor/director to walk with us on our way; we will see our directors approximately every month or two.
- pursue deeper discipleship individually and together as we seek to be formed in the likeness of Christ.

Simplicity

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. —Acts 4:32

*“Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he [Jesus] went in to stay with them.
—Luke 24:29b*

Anyone who chooses to walk in the way of Jesus must consider that Jesus asks us to trust him for our daily bread, to care for the poor, the orphan and the widow, and to find joy and contentment in a life of simplicity. A life defined by simplicity can hear and respond quickly to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Our vow of simplicity means having all we need for a healthy life, but seeking to remain free from the bondage of unhealthy attachments. We choose an attitude inclined away from accumulation. We desire to be mindful of wastefulness, to care for God’s creation, and to be concerned for how we use what we own.

Together we desire to support each other in creating a sharing economy with our possessions and to help each other—and others—with material needs, as well as to practice hospitality. We define life not by what we have, but by who we are and who’s we are, what we do with our life, and by the relationships that we have.

Accordingly, we choose individually and collectively to step towards a life simpler in possessions, time, and technology.

In our call to simplicity, we trust in God’s providence and provision. We desire to respect God’s creation and to live into the reality that each person is made in the image of God. We recognize that simplicity is a grace from God that we receive—and that simplicity is found in seeking the reign of God.

As outward signs of our vow we will creatively and prayerfully strive to:

- be conscious of living within our means, becoming aware of our consumption and waste, and holding each other accountable to ways we can simplify and minimize debt.
- share, use and reuse products and resources that respect people and God’s creation.
- share with others who have less than ourselves.
- share and exchange our time, stories, knowledge, and skills with others, recognizing that every individual has something of value to contribute.
- assess our technological use to lower the negative impact that technology can have on our well-being and our relationships.
- lower our dependency on non-renewable fossil fuels.
- pay any of our workers a living wage, but never more than the average person/family in our context.
- uphold each other in finding and doing good work which reflects our God-given vocations.
- establish a healthy balance of work, rest and play, including Sabbath-practice.
- produce food and other goods that demonstrate loving care of the plots of land we have been given.
- create a means of long-term economic community sustainability.
- fulfill our responsibilities calmly and gracefully, resisting distractions from both without and within, yet keeping our hearts awake to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Presence

The word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighbourhood. —John 1:14 (The Message)

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus... While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them. —Luke 24:13–14

Our vow of presence is taken in response to the radical presence offered to us by God. We recognize that God has become present to us throughout time, whether in a pillar of cloud, a prophetic word, or in the radical act of the Incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We believe that God continues to be present to us through the Holy Spirit drawing us deeper into relationship with God and all of God's creation.

As a community, we respond to our call to presence as we incarnate the Gospel in our daily lives, work, and relationships. A vow of presence requires the hard work of walking with each other through our pain and disillusionment, as well as in our celebration and thanksgiving. It is a commitment to authenticity and availability, knowing that as we journey together, Jesus joins us on the road, widening our view and changing our hearts.

A vow of presence invites us into active relationships of accountability and reconciliation with one another and with the land and the neighborhood where we have been placed. Through our commitment to stability, hospitality and presence, we become witnesses to what God is doing in our neighborhoods and in the world, and we become signs and symbols of that in-breaking reign of peace, justice and love.

As outward signs of our vow we will creatively and prayerfully strive to:

- open our eyes to God's presence in our midst, and to be God's presence in the lives of others.
- situate our lives and/or work within geographic proximity to the Emmaus Community neighborhood, seeking stability and rootedness in our relationships and partnerships.
- prioritize the health and discipleship of our primary relationships, while being committed to tangible presence in the Emmaus Community and our neighborhood.
- receive and extend hospitality, challenging ourselves to welcome Christ in the stranger.
- seek reconciliation, justice, peace and joy, in solidarity with all of God's creation.
- seek to connect local justice issues with the struggles for justice globally.
- be transformed by our neighborhood and its strengths and gifts, even as we partner for its common good and health.
- share our lives more deeply through common meals, stories, struggles, joys, ages and stages of life.
- regularly attend Emmaus Community gatherings, discerning God's desires for our community communally and seeking God together with open hearts.

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In order to make these commitments more concrete, each community member of the Emmaus Community will create an individual and/or family plan which takes life circumstances into account. This will be shared, reviewed, and updated annually, reflecting the individual and collective ways in which each covenanted member is prayerfully called to move toward the embodiment of the Rule and Rhythms.

All these signs are practised by the power of the Holy Spirit. As a community, we aim to live each moment with grace, celebration (including joyful laughter!) and generosity both to self and others. We seek to live prayerfully and creatively according to the spirit of these commitments, rather than limiting ourselves to the words in which they are written. In living out this call, we affirm that it is a call to abundant life, freedom, celebration and joy, as we grow in the loving discipline of a faithful community.

Appendix: The New Monasticism

“The restoration of the church will surely come only from a new type of monasticism which has nothing in common with the old but a complete lack of compromise in a life lived in accordance with the Sermon on the Mount in the discipleship of Christ.” - Bonhoeffer, 1935

Twelve Marks of a New Monasticism

1. Relocation to the "abandoned places of Empire" [at the margins of society]
2. Sharing economic resources with fellow community members and the needy among us
3. Hospitality to the stranger
4. Lament for racial divisions within the church and our communities combined with the active pursuit of a just reconciliation
5. Humble submission to Christ's body, the Church
6. Intentional formation in the way of Christ and the rule of the community along the lines of the old novitiate
7. Nurturing common life among members of an intentional community
8. Support for celibate singles alongside monogamous married couples and their children
9. Geographical proximity to community members who share a common rule of life
10. Care for the plot of God's earth given to us along with support of our local economies
11. Peacemaking in the midst of violence and conflict resolution within communities along the lines of Matthew 18
12. Commitment to a disciplined contemplative life