



# gracefellowship

Follow The Leader  
August 30, 2020  
Developing Life Rhythms: Solitude

## :: Luke 6:12-19

If you want to have an intentional life you need intentional rhythms to guide you. We know this to be true in getting our education, building our careers, or having a strong marriage and parenting environment in our homes. But how many of us truly put much thought to being a follower of Jesus requiring intentional rhythms? For many people who call themselves Christians, the life rhythm they have established is going to church on Sunday. Beyond that, there is very little Jesus-type rhythms to feed their soul.

Jesus may have been the most intentional person who ever lived. Everywhere Jesus went was with purpose; everything Jesus did had intentionality behind it. So it's not surprising when you read about the life of Jesus you discover patterns that He followed to build a life rhythm that allowed Him to live in perfect obedience to God the Father. Now, as Jesus' followers, we need to learn from Jesus how to develop these same rhythms.

If you want to have an intentional life you need intentional life rhythms to guide you. Last week we said that we needed to learn the rhythm of being with God and being sent by God. Today I want to expand on that rhythm and frame it a little differently. Then we are going to spend three weeks talking about how to develop this rhythm in our lives.

So here is the rhythm we see in the life of Jesus that needs to be developed in our lives as we follow our leader:

### **Jesus Life Rhythm:**

**Solitude**    **→**    **Community**    **→**    **Mission**

I want you to see how this looks from the vantage point of one specific Scripture and then we are going to spend time discovering over the next three weeks how to put this into practice in our lives.

**:: Luke 6:12-19**

**12 One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.**

[Jesus spent time in solitude alone with God.]

**13 When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles:**

**14 Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew,**

**15 Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot,**

**16 Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.**

[Jesus called 12 men into deep relationship with Himself to establish a community.]

**17 He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon,**

**18 who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured,**

**19 and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.**

[The community Jesus established allowed His mission to be carried out.]

Last week we talked about how Jesus developed the rhythm of being with God and being sent on mission by God. Then we saw how Jesus gave that same rhythm to His original disciples- and for us today- to follow. We laid the groundwork for what it looks like to follow the life rhythms of Jesus. Today we want to put some more practical application to that and develop personal life rhythms to follow Jesus.

**Solitude is an “Up” rhythm that draws us into deeper intimacy with God.**

Getting alone and being in private with God is important for each and every follower of Jesus.

Here’s what I think Jesus knew better than anyone: Power comes from the inside out! When we are operating from a full tank, constantly being refreshed, we aren’t worried about spiritual depletion.

When we live from the outside in we are likely to experience frustration and burn-out. It’s like seeing the gas light come on in your car and then being surprised when you keep driving without stopping for fuel and the car dies.

How many of you have never seen the gas light on your car because you never let it get anywhere near empty? You don't even know if your low fuel indicator light works!

How many of you like to see how far you can drive once the low fuel light comes on?

I've never run out of gas before, but I have had multiple experiences when I thought I might. I can testify to the anxiety and stress and frustration that comes with driving on empty. Unfortunately, when I take that illustration and apply it to my spiritual life, I can tell you what it feels like to be operating on empty in that realm as well. Jesus never operated on empty and He doesn't want us to either. Jesus wants us to experience the power of being filled by His love, grace, mercy and favor as we get alone with Him in daily moments of solitude.

One of my favorite stories in Scripture that illustrates this comes from Luke 10 and describes two sisters with very different personalities. Jesus is traveling from village to village and comes to the town of Bethany outside Jerusalem where his good friends Lazarus, Martha and Mary live. Throughout Jesus' ministry this is a consistent place for Jesus to stop. In fact, the last week of Jesus' life he spends each night at their house in Bethany while He walks into Jerusalem each day prior to Passover. Listen to this story:

**:: Luke 10:38-42**

**38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.**

**39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.**

**40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"**

**41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things,**

**42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."**

Martha is a type-A personality. She wants to do and achieve. She will move mountains to take care of Jesus and his entourage. And there's nothing wrong with that. Someone has to host when a large group of men show up at your house! But she got the order wrong. Her life rhythm was a mess. Martha jumped right into serving mode. She was trying to be on mission without spending time in solitude and community. Look back at how she is described:

Martha was distracted, worried, upset and she felt alone ("Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!").

Martha is so off balance that she actually accuses Jesus of not caring about her. What if Martha had taken time when Jesus came in to her home to sit at Jesus' feet for 30 minutes, or an hour, enjoying community and then had gotten up to go to work? She put mission and serving ahead of solitude and community and Jesus has to tell her what her sister chose was better. That had to sting, right? Especially if Mary is the younger sister, which we assume because she is always listed second. No older sibling wants to hear that their kid sister is right and they are wrong! Martha is working hard to prepare for her guests and Mary gets applauded for sitting in the living room listening to Jesus?

The problem for us is, most of us read that passage and agree with Martha! There are things to be done and problems in the world to solve and we ask, "How can I ever stop and spend time with God?" Who gets to just stop and spend time at the feet of Jesus?

Here's what's fascinating to me: The presence of Jesus was what distracted Martha from enjoying being with Jesus! Let me ask you a question: What things distract you from spending time with God? What gets the place of attention in your life that God deserves?

- Work
- Sports
- Family
- Sleep

We all have things in our lives that we have put ahead of time with God. Learning to live with the rhythm of solitude helps us reprioritize what is most important in our lives.

I'm not going to tell you when to spend time with God; Jesus had times he slipped away very early in the morning and prayed. There were other times he sent the disciples and the crowds away and he prayed through the night. Here's what I will encourage you to do: find the time that works for you and be as consistent as possible. You have to be responsible to carve out time in your schedule to be with Jesus. This could be early in the morning, before others wake up, during your lunch break, while you're mowing the yard, at night when the house is quiet, etc...

**To truly follow the leadership of Jesus we need to recognize that consistent times of solitude is needed.**

- Sabbath rest is built into the weekly schedule by God. I think God knew without a command to stop we would never stop. Even with a command to rest we hardly ever stop! To many of us, Sunday is the day we go to the spiritual gas station and try to get filled up for the week. But is that what God intended?
- Illustration: Eating once a week

- We would never feed ourselves physical food once a week, why are we content to do that spiritually?
- If you want to learn to spend time with Jesus and begin feeding yourself daily during the week let me give you some simple tips to do that.

## **Feed Yourself Spiritually**

### **1. Get alone and pray.**

:: **Matthew 6:6**

**6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.**

\* I enjoy using the Psalms as a prayer guide when I get stuck in my prayer life. Praying Scripture is a good discipline as you are learning to spend time with Jesus.

### **2. Read and Meditate on God's Word**

\* I find it helpful to read through a book of the Bible a chapter at a time. Sometimes, when I come across a long chapter I may just focus on a section of that chapter. Rather than just opening my Bible randomly and saying, "Let's see what God has for me today," I understand that the books of the Bible are meant to be read in context. Most of the NT books were letters to the churches. You would never read part of a letter. We are meant to spend time with God by reading His Word.

\* Meditate: Think deeply or focus your mind for a period of time. In other words, don't just read to check your box for the day that you spent time reading your Bible. I like to either write something in the margin of my Bible or in a journal that I felt like God was showing me as I read. Then I want to come back to that thought throughout the day.

### **3. Take an action step in obedience to God.**

- Before you walk away from your time with God ask Him to show you what He wants you to do that day.
  - Follow- Is there an area of your life where you are not following Jesus, but something else that is sitting in the place of God in your life?
  - Change- God may show you an area of life that He wants to change (attitude, belief, behavior)
  - Mission- Through reading and meditating on Scripture God may show you a next step to take to join Him by being on mission in your daily life in a specific way. (Work, family, community, etc...)

Those are all ways you can begin spending consistent time with Jesus. Here's the next thing I want to encourage you to see:

**Occasional times of prolonged solitude are needed as we follow Jesus.**

Perhaps instead of your normal 15 minutes or 30 minutes, or whatever time you spend with Jesus you need to take one day a month and spend an hour reading the Bible, praying, meditating, journaling, etc... Or maybe you need to schedule one weekend each year to get away somewhere and just connect with God on a deep and personal level. You may need to build a prolonged season of prayer and fasting into your schedule. There are times that, like Jesus, we need prolonged periods of drawing near to God.

**“The power of God rests on us in proportion to our drawing near to God.” – Charles Spurgeon**

**Solitude is part of the rhythm God has built into our lives as we follow Jesus. This is an “up” rhythm that connects us to God with the goal of knowing and loving God more deeply.**

- Pray