

LFC Leadership Rule of Life (Trellis)

August 2009

Why have an LFC Leadership Rule of Life?

God calls us all to become like Jesus. Jesus says, "I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly."* We experience this abundance of life – here and now – as our passions, character, understanding, and relationships are increasingly aligned with those of Christ. This lifelong transformation within and among us is the continual gift of God's Spirit. We are called to be renewed into the likeness of Jesus – but we do not always fully embrace this calling. Sometimes we seem content to be known as "Christians" without *intentionally engaging with this work of the Holy Spirit in our lives*. Other times we desperately long for a new way of life, wanting to grow in our walk with Jesus, but needing help and encouragement. We, therefore, commit to pursue passionately and to receive joyfully God's grace to be more fully transformed into the image of Jesus Christ.

Renewal into the image of Christ is not a human attainment; it is a gift of grace. God mercifully uses all our experiences, including our suffering and trials, to teach and transform us. Even so, transformation requires our involvement and effort. We need to make ourselves available to the Holy Spirit's work in all our life experiences, particularly through intentional engagement with historical Christian disciplines, including Word and sacrament. These practices open us to the presence and grace of God. As a result, we become, through time and experience, the kind of persons who naturally express love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Taken from "A Call to Spiritual Formation", Renovare

In the New Testament, two Greek words are translated "rule" in the English: "kanon", which means 'a standard, a straight rod'; and "arche" which means 'a beginning'. Though these two words are translated "rule" in the English, the combination of the two meanings gives us the Greek word for "trellis", which is actually where we get the English word "rule". A trellis is a tool that enables a grapevine to get off the ground (begin) and grow upward, becoming more fruitful and productive. In the same way, a rule of life is a trellis that helps us abide in Christ and become more fruitful spiritually, keeping God at the center of everything we do.

As we begin a new decade together, we consider this year a turning point in our life together as we move our leadership to a "rule: that has the power to serve as a "trellis" for all of us. We are aware the word rule has negative connotations for many people; implying legalism, restrictions, and severity. But in actuality, a rule of life is a framework for freedom, not a set of restrictions that deny life. It provides perspective and clarity regarding the way of life to which God has called us.

The purpose of our rule is to define a common rhythm for our spiritual growth. That growth is for the purpose of keeping us faithful to our uniqueness as a church community and to unite around it. It says this is 'who we are, this is our story' and reminds us of those things God has put on our heart:

Our Mission: **To make more and better disciples of Jesus Christ.**

Our Unique Vision: **Serving people who've given up on church, but haven't given up on God.**

This rule expresses the roots and calling of our particular local church and calls us to be in the Father's hand to vigorously accomplish the purpose of Lake Forest Church together.

At the same time, it is meant to keep us moving upward into all that God has called us to be. As a leadership, it is a call to all of those at Lake Forest that this is who God has made us and this is who he is calling us to be. A good rule should challenge us and not be so easy that we are not stretched. At the same time, it can't be so demanding that it overwhelms us. Otherwise, it produces discouragement and defeats its purpose. Our hope is that this rule will provide boundaries while leaving plenty of room for flexibility and individuality.

Your Pastors in the Journey,
Mike and Mitch

LFC Leadership Specific “Trellis”

The following “Rule of Life” is our “trellis”. We will cling to it as one way to keep God at the center of everything we do — to love our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and our neighbors as ourselves. This “trellis” provides grips for the kind of leadership we aim to embody, as well as a foundation for the relational culture we want to build and function within. In simplicity: *“We long to **Know** Jesus and worship Him, **Grow** in our love for Him, **Show** His grace to one another and **Go** to our community and to the world to tell them about their Savior.”*

To Know Jesus and Worship Him

Scripture — Our lives are built on the Word of God. It is our food and primary means of revelation from him. We commit to spend time each day in Scripture, seeking God’s face, dwelling in his presence and praying out of his Word.

Stillness—expressed in **Silence, Solitude and Sabbath** — Along with building silence and solitude into our daily routines, we will also attempt to grow in our Sabbath by practicing an extended period of time regularly during the year.

Prayer — We will pause to be and speak with and hear God two to three times a day to remember Him, spending time in communion with Him, preferably with Scripture, silence, meditation and prayer.

Community—We will commit to being in relationship with others that are committed to spurring us on in our walks with Christ. As we lead others, we will have others that will lead us. These relationships will be a community group, a men’s or women’s group, mentor, counselor or mature friend depending on each person’s unique needs and season in Christ. We are also committed to faithfully gathering weekly with the rest of the body of LFC in communal worship of our God.

To Grow in our Love for Jesus

Heart: Confession—Ephesians 4 tells us not only to put on the new self but also to put off the old self. This includes practicing the discipline of confession. Regularly, we will confess the areas of our lives in which God’s grace has yet to penetrate and remove that are sinful to him. We confess them realizing they are displeasing to Him but assured that his grace is sufficient until they are gone.

Mind: Study— We are constantly growing and taking steps to keep learning about Jesus, as well as learning about our unique values and particular area of calling. We commit to remaining teachable and in the attitude of not “having it all figured out.”

Soul and Strength — We are committed to a spiritual formation model that embraces our whole person, including the emotional and physical components of who we are as image bearers of God. We understand the stewardship of our emotional and physical bodies is also part of our discipleship and modeling. We seek to regularly care for our physical temples through healthy eating habits, consistent exercise, and sufficient amounts of sleep, respecting our God-given limits. We also commit to playing and practicing recreation. We humbly commit to seeking help when we emotionally or physically are in areas that are unhealthy.

To Show Jesus to One Another

Salt– We embrace the skills and behaviors that put feet on our theology and follow the guidance of Paul in Colossians 3: putting to death things like “sexual immorality, drunkenness, lust, evil desires and greed; ridding ourselves of anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language.” Instead we will clothe ourselves with “compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience—forgiving as our Lord has forgiven us.” This is the way we commit to engaging one another and relating in all of our relationships.

Servants—We have each one been equipped with unique gifts to build and serve his church. Serving is a response to the love and grace we have been given through Jesus and not about “getting busy”. We commit to using our gifts sacrificially, participating in the attitude Christ displayed in Philippians 2-being broken and poured out.

Stewards — We model percentage giving (using the tithe as a minimal guideline) in giving to God’s work. We commit to managing our material resources in a manner that honors God and avoids the traps and enticements of Western culture. We commit to simplicity in our lives that God might use all resources He has given us for His kingdom purposes.

To Go into our Culture and the World

Interruptible: We will remain aware and available for participation in mission of various kinds according to the calling and initiatives of the Spirit. By keeping our lives slower, we will be available for interruption and see it as being in the Missio Dei.

Praying and Participating: We commit not only to praying “for” but also being involved “in” the work God is doing in our community and in the world. We commit to calling those that we lead into this as well.

Healthy Family: We live in a culture of broken families and busy lives. Our greatest ministry is a commitment to do all that is necessary to keep our own families and relationships healthy. This includes realizing our ministry at home is as important as and in partnership with our ministry at LFC.