

TRINITY  
GRACE  
CHURCH

# How to Make a Practices Plan

A GUIDE TO PRESENCE, FORMATION, & LOVE

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# Begin Here

We are in the midst of a permanent becoming. Each day we can make small but meaningful steps in response to God's grace that form our character to be like Christ. This guide can help you make a plan to follow Jesus in your everyday life.

**THE GOSPEL OF JESUS IS A VICTORY** in the world for life over death and through faith it is our salvation and brings us into the Kingdom of God. To be in the family of God and to enjoy and seek the Kingdom of God shapes our life as followers of Jesus. He invites each of us to “seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you”(Matthew 6:33).

We are asking all those who call Trinity Grace their church home to be intentional about seeking God and God's Kingdom in a shared way. Make a specific plan for how you will live in the next season of your life. One way we can have unity as a church community in this pursuit is to use presence, formation, and love as central points of how we plan and live our lives.

In this guide, you will find some diagnostic questions and thoughts to help get you started in making a plan. You might think of this as a simple “Rule of Life,” a life-giving structure for freedom, growth, and joy from the ancient church.

We encourage you to let this be a simple exercise; have grace for yourself that you may need to adjust your plan over time. Simply give it a try, talk through the process with a friend, accountability partner, or small group, and be curious about how God is forming you.

**Presence**  
to be with God

**Love**  
to live by the Spirit

**Formation**  
to become like Jesus



# How to make a practices plan

PART 1

## Pray + Ask

FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT  
TO GUIDE YOU.

PART 2

## Consider + Discern

MOVE THROUGH THE SECTIONS  
OF THIS GUIDE. CONSIDER  
THE QUESTIONS AND THEMES  
AS WAY TO DISCERN A SET OF  
PRACTICES FOR YOUR LIFE.

PART 3

## Plan + Share

WRITE OUT (THINK DAILY,  
WEEKLY, YEARLY) HOW YOU  
WILL LIVE IN PRESENCE,  
FORMATION, AND LOVE AND  
SHARE YOUR PLAN WITH  
OTHERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

# Pray + Ask

Begin by inviting the Holy Spirit to guide you. Remember that our lives are shaped by the gracious movement of God and our rhythms of response. One way to understand it is through the language of breakthroughs and habits. God gives insight, growth, and transformation, and we obey God's direction.

Habits can be established by what we choose and what we allow space in our life. Much of our character is formed by what we repeatedly do. Honestly and prayerfully consider these categories in your life.

Space is provided so you can make notes as you move through each section.

## **Ask honestly.**

How do I live connected with the presence of God?

How am I growing to become more like Jesus?

How am I living a life of love in action?

## **Pray for insight in these areas.**

**Personal:** the daily practices and rhythms of our life that shape who we are.

**Family:** those we live with or have responsibility for.

**Church:** the regular connections we have with other followers of Jesus – our church family.

**Community:** our wider world of vocation, city, and society where we live our life.

## **Remember you are a whole person.**

Abiding: how can I make space each day to commune with God?

Mind: what am I learning in this season of my life and what can support further growth?

Body: do I have a healthy diet and regular exercise or physical activity?

Relationships: am I woven into to honest and healthy relationships? Am I too isolated or socially spread thin?

Rest: do I take time to rest, disconnect, and practice Sabbath?

Work and Money: what is my sense of vocation? Am I living with simplicity and generosity?

Gospel and Hospitality: does anyone know who Jesus is because I have shared with them? Am I actively welcoming others (especially those not exactly like me) into my life?

# Consider + Discern

In Part 1, we took some time to consider what is present in our life right now, and what realities we must contend with. Now we can make a further step of honesty and examine the rhythms of our life as they currently are.

You may find you are really happy with aspects of your practice, or you may find areas you want to change. The point is to be honest, not to stir up shame or guilt. Each day there will be things we choose and things that just happen to us. In this exercise, we are looking to discern how we are really spending the available time we have so we are prepared to make adjustments in the final stage of this process.

As before, the Holy Spirit is our guide in discernment. We can pray with the Psalmist: “search me, O God.” Ask God for insights about your heart and mind as well as your schedule.

## Pay attention to your life.

What are the actual (not simply my desired) habits in my life right now?

What streams of information, learning, or culture most regularly inform me?

What are the sins, struggles, distractions, conditions, or wounds that are impacting my life right now?

What are the realities (opportunities or limitations) of this season of my life and world that I must accept?

Who are my friends? What is the community that I actually rely on and share life with?

What do I find myself repeatedly thinking about, bothered, or inspired by? Where can I be a tangible expression of love?

## **Consider how you grow and the rhythms of your life.**

### **PRESENCE – TO BE WITH GOD**

What are the ways I most connect with a sense of God's nearness?

How do I regularly express worship and thankfulness to God?

How do I listen for God to speak to me? (e.g., Holy Spirit, Scripture, other Jesus followers, circumstances)

### **FORMATION – TO BECOME LIKE JESUS**

What appears as the priority of my life based on actions not simply intentions? What is shaping my life?

Who might help me know how I could grow in my life right now?

What daily, weekly, monthly, yearly practices will I engage in to follow Jesus?

### **LOVE – TO LIVE BY THE SPIRIT**

How can I be intentional about putting others above myself in my life?

What matters has God convicted me to care about and how I can get involved in service?

What actions of doing justice, showing mercy, or being generous can I take in my life?



# Plan + Share

Now is the time to apply the discernment God has given you as you moved through this guide. Make a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly plan for building in presence, formation, and love. Not simply as ideas but practices in your life.

You may say, “every day I want to connect with God in the Bible and prayer.” You might schedule to go on a long walk at least once a week or serve practically in your neighborhood. And you might set a goal to read two books from spiritually-encouraging authors that you love over the next year.

There are practices that have stood the test of time that may help you get started, but feel free to make this true to who you are and where you are in this season of life. Once you’ve made your plan, share it with a few friends who can know this is important and support you.

## Presence.

What will you do to seek God and to live more aware of his presence in your life?

### DAILY PRACTICES

### WEEKLY PRACTICES

### MONTHLY PRACTICES

### YEARLY PRACTICES

## **Formation.**

What will you do to grow to be more like Jesus?

DAILY PRACTICES

WEEKLY PRACTICES

MONTHLY PRACTICES

YEARLY PRACTICES

## **Love.**

What will you do to live a life of love in action with the Spirit?

DAILY PRACTICES

WEEKLY PRACTICES

MONTHLY PRACTICES

YEARLY PRACTICES

A photograph of an underpass or bridge structure. The ceiling is composed of a grid of green-painted steel beams and corrugated metal panels. The structure is supported by several pillars, some of which are made of stone. A concrete barrier runs along the edge of the road. A street light is visible in the distance, casting a warm glow. The overall scene is industrial and urban.

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