**THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

(preferably 20 minutes)

PURPOSE:

* To present the service sheet or the Rule of Life sheet, which will help the participants structure their lives.
* To make a plan for growth in piety.
* To familiarize participants with the aids for growth in their life in grace.

CORE IDEAS:

* Jesus is the pattern for true Christian piety and our pattern for spiritual growth.
* The importance of a rule of life.
* Persuading participants to develop their own rule of life.
* Various aids are available to grow in a life of grace.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Retrace the steps the participants have been through during the Weekend.
2. Clarify any items not adequately covered in previous talks or which need clarification. Therefore, to some extent this talk is prepared as the Weekend progresses.
3. Repeat the themes of grace and faith, and our need for piety, study, and action to maintain our life in grace.
4. We rely upon the sacraments to seal our fellowship with God and to empower our mission into the world.
5. The obstacles to grace threaten our fellowship and mission.
6. To live the Christian life we need a plan, a rule of life.

JESUS IS OUR LIFE AND PATTERN FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH:

1. In Jesus, we find pardon, purpose, peace, and power. (see Rom. 5:8-11; Matt. 6:33; John 14:27; 1 Cor.10:13; 1 Cor. 1:18-25)
2. Jesus is a pattern for overcoming despair, sin, and death in our own lives. Jesus in John 14.6 said “I am the way the truth and the life.” This can be related to piety, study and action, our three-legged stool.
3. We must seek to allow Jesus to enter our lives more fully and to reshape them. We cannot just admire Him from afar. (Heb.12:2-3)
4. The most prominent feature of Jesus’ pattern of life was prayer and communion with God. (Luke 3:21; 6:12; 9:18; 22:41-46)

WE MUST MAKE A CONSCIOUS DECISION TO LET JESUS BECOME OUR WAY OF LIFE:

1. Distribute the Rule of Life sheets. Take time to examine the sheets. On this sheet we describe ourselves and our intentions.
2. No one is to feel coerced to make this commitment and before making any commitment participants should realize what it entails. Participants may want to complete the Rule of Life sheet after further prayer.
3. The Rule of Life sheet provides a method to let Jesus enter our lives more fully and to reshape them because of the commitment we make.
4. There are a variety of aids for developing piety in the life of grace.

CORPORATE WORSHIP:

1. Corporate worship in union with fellow Christians is part of our obligation. (BCP p. 855; Heb.10:24-25)
2. Worshipping together provides mutual support.
3. Our worship is essential to our witness and the truth of the Christian faith. (2 Pet.1:8-10; James 1:22)

COMMUNION:

1. We are created to be in communion with God.
2. We need frequent communion if we expect to enjoy eternal communion with Him.
3. The Eucharist is a model for other kinds of communion.
   1. We are joined with Christ.
   2. We express praise and thanks to God. (Col. 2:6-7; Phil. 4:6; Eph. 5:4)
   3. We receive forgiveness and strength.

PERSONAL PRAYER:

1. Prayer is a prominent feature of our lives.
2. Prayer is communion with God.
3. There are different kinds of prayer:
   1. A morning, noon, and evening offering.
   2. Adoration, praise, thanksgiving, penitence, intercession, oblation and petition. (BCP pp. 856-857)
   3. All prayer involves openness to God, honesty with God, and waiting upon God.
4. We may not experience communion with God each time we pray but we grow spiritually as we continue to pray.
5. Have a plan for praying. The key elements are: a period of time; posture; place; a passage of scripture; practice the patience of God.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION:

1. We need friends in our spiritual life to develop our relationship with Jesus.
2. A friend to help us is a spiritual director.
3. A spiritual director is someone wise in spiritual matters, objective, and trustworthy. A spiritual director does not have to be a priest.
4. The purpose of spiritual direction is to examine our spiritual journey, set priorities, and find guides for growing our life in grace.

SACRAMENTAL CONFESSION:

1. Confession is being realistic about our failures so we may be forgiven.
2. An explanation of the confession process should be given.

MEDITATION:

1. Meditation is giving attention to God so we may become more Christ-like.
2. There are numerous methods of meditation. Some examples may be given.

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER:

1. The Prayer Book is a resource for spiritual growth.
2. The Prayer Book is a “pilgrim’s guide” and intended for everyone from child to Bishop.
3. The Prayer Book is a resource for praying and teaching.

COMMENTARY ON THE OUTLINE:

1. Following the talk, time should be provided for thought and prayer before participants complete their sheets, however some participants may want more time to complete their Rule of Life sheet.
2. Participants should have time to consult with a Spiritual Advisor if desired.
3. The talk should be convincing, practical, and instructional.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING:

*The Anglican Vision* by James Griffiss

*A Matter of Faith* by Charles P. Price

*Faith and Practice* by Frank E. Wilson

*What is Anglicanism* by Urban T. Holmes III