



**RANCHO
EL CAMINO
WAY OF LIFE**

What is a Way of Life?

A Way of Life or more commonly referred to in the study of spiritual disciplines, a Rule of Life, is an intentional system or pattern of spiritual disciplines or practices designed to provide structure and direction upon which to build your life. A Rule (Way) of Life is not a list of rules or regulations which we follow but rather a framework for growth. It is helpful to think of it in terms of a “guide”, a “way”, or even better yet a “trellis.” A trellis is a *supporting* structure upon which the *organic* growth of a plant is trained, pruned, and supported. It helps a plant grow upward and outward, bear more fruit or flowers, and in general helps draw out the best qualities of the plant. A trellis is a means to an end, namely to bear more fruit or flowers and show off the aesthetic quality of a plant. It is not the end itself. A well placed and structured trellis is hardly noticeable because it is the plant, its fruit and flowers, which first catch your eye and not the trellis itself. You may see and notice the trellis but the trellis subtly and simply draws your attention back to the plant itself. Additionally, there can be too much or too little trellis. Too little trellis, too little structure, too little pruning, and a plant will continue to grow but it will simply not be able to bear as much fruit as if it was supported with a trellis and given proper pruning and direction for growth. On the other side too much trellis can stifle the growth of a plant and distract from the plant itself and the original intent of producing more fruit and displaying the natural beauty of the plant. A well placed and structured trellis is created in this tension and is thus always under revision for the sake of the plant. The trellis is adapted to best serve the plant. The trellis is there to serve the plant and not the plant serving the trellis. These are all the same with a Rule (Way) of Life: it is a guide and trellis upon which our spirits and entire selves can grow

A Biblical example can easily be seen in the Sabbath. It is a structured time set aside to honor God as Lord of our lives and rest in His presence. The Sabbath was designed by God to aid us in growing upward and outward toward him and bear fruit in our lives. As followers of Christ, we do not rest from our work but rather we should work out of our rest. The Sabbath was not intended as a “rule” or “regulation” which we must adhere to for the sake of following rules. When we treat the Sabbath this way we quickly and easily slide into legalism and turn the Sabbath into an end and not a means. We mistake the created thing for the Creator and ironically in the very act of obeying in the name of God we have turned our hearts away from him. On the other hand, if we solely think of the Sabbath as an arbitrary “rule” or “regulation” which we can ignore we quickly slide into apathy and turn the Sabbath too into an end and not a means. Yet again, we mistake the created thing for the Creator and forsake opportunity for greater growth. We must live in the tension between the two and always remember the words of Christ, “Sabbath was created for man and not man for the Sabbath

Why did you create a Way of Life?

We created a way of life because we want to be intentional in our spiritual growth and culture as a ranch and we want to “be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” We recognize that a way of life and spiritual disciplines do not earn one favor with God, merit his grace, or buy one salvation. God’s grace and gift of salvation are free gifts which have been given to us through the sacrifice of His son Jesus Christ and the sending of the Holy Spirit. However, we also recognize that prosperous and fruitful growth rarely comes without intentionality and some form of a plan. We have been given God’s grace and the gift of salvation and a rule of life and spiritual disciplines are simply about how to work these things out in our daily lives and not about how to earn His grace and salvation. We seek to live in the tension of Philippians 2:12-13 which says “continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” Therefore, we created a way of life to help us be intentional as we seek to love God with our hearts, souls, minds, and strength and to love our neighbor as our selves. The way of life we’ve created is designed to focus our community and those whom come in contact with the ranch toward the Kingdom of God and the salvation given to us by Jesus Christ our Lord.

How did you create your Way of Life?

We created a way of life out of prayer, reading, and talking with those who were familiar with rules of life and with us as a ranch community. Ways of life are not created quickly and this way of life was created over the course of almost a year. The way of life contains both descriptive and prescriptive areas for our community. In other words it is an outflowing of what already exists on the ranch and it is a trellis or framework to guide us in future growth as “we seek to live a life worthy of the calling we have received.” Ephesians 4:1

How can I create Way of Life?

Anyone can create a way of life and we would encourage you to make one for your own life and family if you are not part of a community which has one already. It does not have to be complex and in fact simple is better. To get ideas you can also easily follow an existing way of life and in time create one for yourself. Here are a few tips or reminders to get you started:

- 1) Ways of life are best lived in community and shared with others. Create one for your family, small group, or ministry team.
- 2) Discern your way of life and not simply decide on one. It is a process and takes time to create. You want it to be an outflowing and not solely a list of values or practices which you acknowledge but don’t truly follow.
- 3) Ways of life are not an end but a means. It is not about earning God’s grace but about living out that grace in our lives. If not, it simply turns into another legalism and completely misses the point.
- 4) A simple question to ask for all practices is, “How does this practice point you toward loving God or loving others?” If it doesn’t it probably shouldn’t be included in your way of life.

The Rancho El Camino Way of Life

The Rancho el Camino Way of Life is made up of 7 core values or spiritual disciplines upon which we seek to build our lives, cultivate the culture of the ranch, and help people encounter the presence of God. It is not intended to replace existing personal times or individual ways in which people choose to connect to God or be a specific liturgy of worship for the ranch. Rather it is a simple framework for which we seek to build our lives and culture of the ranch. The Rancho el Camino Way of Life is structured around 7 core spiritual disciplines which we seek to exemplify in all that we do.

Rancho el Camino Way of Life

- Hospitality
- Stewardship
- Compassion
- Justice
- Prayer
- Simplicity
- Unity

Practical Ways to Use the Rancho el Camino Way of Life

You can use the Rancho el Camino Way of Life in various ways and there isn't a one right way. There are multiple ways our way of life is implemented into the daily life of the ranch. As a reminder it is not meant to necessarily replace personal study or other ways you personally connect with God but it is something that is more interwoven throughout the day and is at work behind the scenes in cultivating the culture of the ranch. We specifically chose 7 spiritual disciplines with the intention that we would mediate on one spiritual discipline or value for each day of the week. You can also choose to mediate on a single discipline for a week or even month at a time. Following, you will find a general explanation of each value and spiritual discipline with scripture references, quotes, prayers, and even songs which can be used for personal or communal times of reflection, meditation, pray, or worship.

For starters...

- Spend 5 minutes a day mediating on a selected scripture passage.
- Print out the various quotes, scripture passages, or prayers to put in key places in your home or office in order to help draw your mind to these things throughout the day.
- Start the day with the selected prayer or song. You can even do this as a family or in a group.
- As time progresses, add your own scripture passages, quotes, prayers, or songs.
- Have a group discussion or study about each of the spiritual disciplines

HOSPITALITY

- Aim:** To be a person who offers the grace, shelter, and presence of Jesus.
- Definition:** Hospitality creates a safe, open space where a friend or stranger can enter and experience the welcoming spirit of Christ in another; discovering more about Christ and themselves.
- Scripture:** "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." *Romans 15:7*; "Love your neighbor as yourself." *Mark 12:31*; "Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some people have entertained angels without knowing it." *Hebrews 13:1-2*; "A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed." *Proverbs 11:25*; "Practice hospitality." *Romans 12:13*.
- Practice Includes:** sharing your home, food, resources, car and all that you call your own so that another might experience the reality of God's welcoming heart; loving, not entertaining, the guest; welcoming others into the "inner circle"; reaching out to and receiving the stranger or the enemy with the hope that he or she might be transformed into a friend and brother or sister
- Quotes:** "The ambassador is more than just an instrument that carries messages to and from his government. He is not the same as the diplomatic mailbag. He is a personal representative of his government, the very embodiment of the one who sends him." *A Spirituality of the Road*
- "Our society seems to be increasingly full of fearful, defensive, aggressive people anxiously clinging to their property and inclined to look at their surrounding world with suspicion, always expecting an enemy to suddenly appear, intrude and do harm. But still-that is our vocation: to convert the hostis into a hospes, the enemy into a guest and to create the free and fearless space where brotherhood and sisterhood can be formed and fully experienced." Henri Nouwen- *Reaching Out*
- Christian brotherhood is not an ideal which we must realize; It is rather a reality created by God in Christ In which we may participate. The more clearly we learn to recognize that the ground and strength and promise of all our fellowship is in Jesus Christ alone, The more serenely shall we think of our fellowship and pray and hope for it. Dietrich Bonhoeffer- *Life Together*

Prayer:

Not merely by the words you say,
Not only in your deeds confessed
But in the most unconscious way
Is Christ expressed

Is it a beatific smile?
A holy light upon your brow?
Oh, no- I felt His presence
while You laughed just now.

For me, 'twas not the truth you taught,
To you so clear, to me still dim,
But when you came to me
you brought a sense of Him

And from your eyes He beckons me
And from your heart His love is shed,
Till I lose sight of you,
and see The Christ instead.

Poem by Beatrice Cleland as cited in Spirituality of the Road

COMPASSION

- Aim:** To become the healing presence of Christ to others
- Definition:** Compassion means feeling with and for others as well as extending mercy and help to them in practical ways. Compassion is part of God's heart for an aching and wounded world.
- Scripture:** "Be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing." *1 Peter 3:8-9*; "Weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice." *Romans 12:13*; "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." *Ephesians 5:1-2*; "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on on love, which binds them together in perfect unity." *Colosians 3:12-14*
- Practice Includes:** seeking to heal wounds rather than react to the wounded; showing mercy rather than passing judgement; finding opportunities to comfort, encourage, and support those who struggle, suffer, and are oppressed.
- Quotes:** Now go out into the highways and the hedges, and look for Jesus in the ragged and naked, in the oppressed and sweated, in those who have lost hope, and in those who are struggling to make good, look for Jesus in them; and when you find him, gird yourselves with his towel of fellowship and wash his feet in the person of his brethren. *-Frank Weston-Late bishop of Zanzibar-*
- "When I look at the mass I will not act. If I look at the one, I will." *-Mother Teresa*
- "Let us not underestimate how hard it is to be compassionate. Compassion is hard because it requires the inner disposition to go with others to the place where they are weak, vulnerable, lonely, and broken. But this is not our spontaneous response to suffering. What we desire most is to do away with suffering by fleeing from it or finding a quick cure for it. As busy, active, relevant ministers, we want to earn our bread by making a real contribution. This means first and foremost doing something to show that our presence makes a difference. And so we ignore our greatest gift, which is our ability to enter into solidarity with those who suffer. Those who can sit in silence with their fellowman, not knowing what to say but knowing that they should be there, can bring new life in a dying heart. Those who are not afraid to hold a hand in gratitude, to shed tears in grief and to let a sigh of distress arise straight from the heart can break through paralyzing boundaries and witness the birth of a new fellowship, the fellowship of the broken." *Henri Nouwen -The Way of the Heart*

Prayer:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen
Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Hymn:

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

When we've been there ten thousand
years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my Shield and Portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

JUSTICE

Aim: To love others by seeking their good, protection, gain and fair treatment

Definition: Justice seeks to help others through correcting and redressing wrongs. It treats others fairly and shows no favoritism.

Scripture: "But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" Amos 5:24; "Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." *Hebrews 13:3* ; "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing quickly appear." *Isaiah 58:6-8* ; "You have neglected the more important matters of the law- justice, mercy, and faithfulness. You should have practiced the former without neglecting the latter." *Matthew 23:23*

Practice Includes: being responsible to God and others; being a good steward of what you own; treating others impartially and fairly; providing for the poor, needy, and oppressed through the means available to you; fight to change unjust systems; refusing to buy products from companies that take advantage of the poor

Quotes: But all this does not exclude the task of preparing the way. This task, is on the contrary, a charge of immense responsibility for all those who know of the coming of Christ. The hungry need bread and the homeless need a roof; the dispossessed need justice and the lonely need fellowship; the undisciplined need order and the slaves need freedom. To allow the hungry to remain hungry would be blasphemy against God and one's neighbor, for what is nearest to God is precisely the need of one's neighbor. It is for the love of Christ, which belongs as much to the hungry as to myself, that I share my bread with them and that I share my dwelling with the homeless. If the hungry do not attain to faith, then the guilt falls on those who refused them bread. To provide the hungry with bread is to prepare the way for the coming of grace. Dietrich Bonhoeffer -Ethics

"Justice is a certain rectitude of mind whereby a man does what he ought to do in the circumstances confronting him." - *Thomas Aquinas* "All men desire peace, but very few desire those things that make for peace" -*Thomas A Kempis*

Prayer:

Dear Lord,
Help us to follow your example,
by looking out for those who each day feel that they are marginalised,
who cannot find hope,
who believe that they have little to offer,
who are overcome by the challenges of poverty.
Help us to widen our horizons,
to make space for the stranger,
to watch out for those who feel invisible,
to give time to the outsider,
to talk to the person facing silence,
to restore justice and value.
Give us the courage to undertake this, the determination to join with others in seeing grace
in every human face,
and the faith to embrace the opportunity in your name. Amen.

Hymn:

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing:
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us:
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth:
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.

PRAYER

Aim: Developing a receptive posture of openness to God and listening to His voice and guidance.

Definition: To quiet the heart before God, rest in Him alone, and develop an open receptivity to the Spirit that enables me to be with God and bring my praise and requests to Him.

Scripture: "Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong...Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore stand in awe of God." *Ecclesiastes 5:1-7*; "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." *1 Philippians 4:6-7*; "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God." *Romans 8:26-27*

Practice Includes: Practicing the presence of God; utilizing various methods of prayer: silence, breath prayers, contemplative, centering, intercessory, lectio divina, etc...; resting in God and allowing the Spirit to speak into our hearts; living a life of continual prayer

Quotes: "The most effective way Brother Lawrence had for communicating with God was to simply do his ordinary work. He did this obediently out of pure love of God, purifying it as much as was humanly possible. He believed it was a serious mistake to think of our prayer time as being different from any other. Our actions should unite us with God when we are involved in our daily activities, just as our prayers unite us with Him in our quiet devotions." *Brother Lawrence -Practicing the Presence of God*

Prayer is first of all listening to God. It's openness. God is always speaking; he's always doing something. Prayer is to enter into that activity. ... Convert your thoughts into prayer. As we are involved in unceasing thinking, so we are called to unceasing prayer. The difference is not that prayer is thinking about other things, but that prayer is thinking in dialogue, ... a conversation with God. *Henri Nouwen*

"To live a spiritual life we must first find the courage to enter into the desert of our loneliness and to change it by gentle and persistent efforts into a garden of solitude."
Henri Nouwen -Reaching Out

Quotes:

"To pray, I think, does not mean to think about God in contrast to thinking about other things, or to spend time with God instead of spending time with other people. Rather, it means to think and live in the presence of God. As soon as we begin to divide our thoughts about God and thoughts about people and events, we remove God from our daily life and put him into a pious little niche where we can think pious thoughts and experience pious feelings. ... Although it is important and even indispensable for the spiritual life to set apart time for God and God alone, prayer can only become unceasing prayer when all our thoughts -- beautiful or ugly, high or low, proud or shameful, sorrowful or joyful -- can be thought in the presence of God. ... Thus, converting our unceasing thinking into unceasing prayer moves us from a self-centred monologue to a God-centred dialogue." *Henri Nouwen*

Prayer:

My Father, what a weak fool I would be if I continued trying to draw life from anything- from someone I love, from success in my work, even from spiritual service- other than you. So I will draw life from these, your words to me: You call me beloved in Christ Jesus. You call me righteous in Christ Jesus. High King of Heaven, I am your child. And my brother is the Lord and Prince of all creation. When I am restless, wanting something to make me "happy," I know this is your call to my soul. I'll feast on your Word, and find my life in you! - Prayer from *Early Will I Seek You: A 40 Day Journey in the Company of Augustine*

"My God, since You are with me and since, by Your will, I must occupy myself with external things, please grant me the grace to remain with you, in Your presence. Work with me, so that my work might be the very best. Receive as an offering of love both my work and all my affections." *Prayer of Brother Lawrence*

Hymn:

What a Friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge,
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield you;
you will find a solace there.

Blessed Savior, Thou hast promised
Thou wilt all our burdens bear
May we ever, Lord, be bringing all to
Thee in earnest prayer.
Soon in glory bright unclouded there
will be no need for prayer
Rapture, praise and endless worship
will be our sweet portion there.

SIMPLICITY

- Aim:** To uncomplicate and untangle our lives so we can focus on what really matters, seeking the kingdom of God.
- Definition:** Simplicity cultivates the great art of letting go. Simplicity aims at loosening inordinate attachment to owning and having. Simplicity brings freedom and with it generosity.
- Scripture:** "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...for where our treasure is, there your heart will be also." *Matthew 6:19-21* ; "I don't have a sense of needing anything personally. I've learned by now to be quite content whatever the circumstances. I'm just as happy with little as with much and with much as with little." *Philippians 4:11-12* ; "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world-the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does-comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever." *1 John 2:15-17*
- Practice Includes:** assessing the things and activities that keep life complicated and confusing and working to simplify things; setting priorities that flow from loving God; downsizing possessions; eating simply; removing distractions and preoccupations with things; practicing solitude and silence
- Quotes:** These blessed poor are no longer slaves to the tyranny of things. They have broken the yoke of the oppressor; and this they have done not by fighting but by surrendering. Though free from all sense of possessing, they yet possess all things. "Theirs is the Kingdom of God." AW Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*
- Tread the Frontiers of Peace and Rest: 4 Ways to The Way of Peace and Liberty
- 1) Strive to do another's will rather than your own.
 - 2) Choose always to have less than more.
 - 3) Seek the lower places in life, dying to the need to be recognized and important.
 - 4) Always, and in everything, desire that the will of God may be completely fulfilled in you.
- Thomas A Kempis- The Imitation of Christ*
- Prayer:** Father, I want to know You, but my coward heart fears to give up its toys. I cannot part with them without inward bleeding, and I do not try to hide from You the terror of parting. I come trembling, but I do come. Please root from my heart all those things which I have cherished so long and which have become a very part of my living self, so that You may enter and dwell there without rival. Then You shall make the place of Your feet glorious. Then shall my heart have no need of the sun to shine in it, for You will be the light of it, and there shall be no night there. In Jesus' Name, Amen. *-Prayer from A.W Tozer in The Pursuit of God*

UNITY

- Aim:** To live in harmony with Christ's desire for the church to be one; to be a bridge builder and peacemaker in the body of Christ.
- Definition:** Unity is the mark that demonstrates to the world that the body of Christ is one organism, with one faith, one hope, one baptism and one God and Father of all. Unity lives out the reality that Christ has already reconciled all things to himself. So in him we belong to one another.
- Scripture:** "How good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity." Psalm 133:1; "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." Ephesians 4:4-6; "The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind— Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, so they might be one heart and mind with us." John 17:21; "And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." Colossians 1:20
- Practice Includes:** working with believers from various traditions to achieve kingdom purposes, having dialogue that bridges understanding between Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant denominations, refraining against speaking unkind, slanderous and divisive things against others in the body of Christ, giving people the benefit of the doubt and not rushing to conclusions, speaking respectfully, not gossiping
- Quotes:** "You [Jesus Christ] were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation. [Revelation 5:9] There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus [Galatians 3:28]. All the churches of Jesus Christ, scattered in diverse cultures, have been redeemed for God by the blood of the Lamb to form one multicultural community of faith. The 'blood' that binds them as brothers and sisters is more precious than the 'blood,' the language, the customs, political allegiances, or economic interests that may separate them. We reject the false doctrine, as though a church should place allegiance to the culture it inhabits and the nation to which it belongs above the commitment to brothers and sisters from other cultures and nations, servants of the one Jesus Christ, their common Lord, and members of God's new community." *Mirslof Volf- Exclusion and Embrace*

Prayer:

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace:
give us grace seriously to lay to heart
the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions.
Take away all hatred and prejudice,
and whatever else may hinder us
from godly union and concord;
that, as there is but one body and one Spirit,
one hope of our calling,
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of us all,
so we may henceforth be all of one heart and of one soul,
united in one holy bond of peace, of faith and charity,
and may with one mind and one mouth glorify you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

STEWARDSHIP

- Aim:** To live as a steward of God's resources in all areas of life; to live out of the awareness that nothing we have is our own and caring for all that God has given us.
- Definition:** Stewardship is the voluntary and generous offering of God's gifts of resources, time, talents, and treasure for the benefit and love of God, others, and for all of creation.
- Scripture:** "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'" *Genesis 1:28* ; "Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth. He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son." *Proverbs 10:4-5* ; "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things." [*Matthew 25:14-30*] ; "Use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings." [*Luke 16:1-14*] "Creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God." *Romans 8:19-21*
- Practice Includes:** A systematic, intentionally generous lifestyle flowing from love of God and others; living in a way that exemplifies that your life, your time, your money, your home, your family are not your own; thoughtfully investing resources and spiritual gifts to benefit the body of Christ; wise management of the resources God has given you, caring for God's creation
- Quotes:** Find out how much God has given you and from it take what you need; the remainder is needed by others. *Augustine*
- There are some who live in a dream world, and there are some who face reality; and then there are those who turn one into the other. *Quote found on a postcard*
- "In the midst of prosperity, the challenge for believers is to handle wealth in such a way that it acts as a blessing, not a curse." *Randy Alcorn*
- "Since my money is God's money, every spending decision I make is a spiritual decision."
John Hagee
- Prayer:** Almighty God, in giving us stewardship over things on earth, you made us fellow workers in your creation. Give us wisdom and reverence so to use all the resources you have given us, so that no one may suffer from our abuse or mismanagement of them. May future generations to come continue to praise you through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- Almighty God, whose loving hand has given us all that we possess. Grant us grace that we may honor you with all that we have and remember the account which we must one day give. May we be faithful stewards of your things, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hymn:

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Be Thou my battle Shield, Sword for the fight;
Be Thou my Dignity, Thou my Delight;
Thou my soul's Shelter, Thou my high Tower:
Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine Inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.