

Introductory thoughts on a moot rhythm of life

It would be easy for us to get bogged down by the enormous amount of detail that we could go into in drawing up a rhythm of life, but this is a danger that we want to avoid. A rhythm of life should be exactly that, a rhythm, not a full concerto with every instrument written up, but rather the background beat that keeps everything else in order, that calls things back on track when they deviate, that reminds us of the type of music we are wanting to play, or you could say what type of lifestyles we are wanting to lead.

Simplicity is the key, the rhythms of life that have worked, and continue to work are those that are easily understood and grasped, this does not mean they are simplistic. The simplicity means that it is far easier to work them into everyday life, they are pretty easy to memorise. Most rhythms can be reduced to four or five words, behind which lie the core ideas of the community.

At the heart of a rhythm of life is the desire to follow Christ where you are. For us, that means in the busy city of London, with all the challenges that presents.

Most rhythms of life can also be seen in part as a reaction against something, the Franciscan vows of Poverty, chastity, obedience were a clear reaction to money, sex and power - issues that had begun to dominate the Church from the time of its alignment to the state in the 3rd century AD. Monks were those who sought to rid themselves of these temptations and instead choose a life dedicated to following in the way of Christ.

For the Northumbria community availability and vulnerability are their two simple 'rules'. They were a reaction to the way in which many people hid their true selves from even their closest friends, and were unable to be vulnerable, instead preferring to live life essentially on their own. The Northumbria communities emphasis on being available to others to listen to them and allow them to share with you and the emphasis on being vulnerable in trying to be honest with each other are reactions against this privatisation of life. This didn't mean forcing people to share with each other, but rather that each person desired to live a life that was open to the wisdom of others, and that they desired to create relationships with people where they could be open and honest with each other.

For us we may be wanting to react against consumerism, individualism, greed, cult of celebrity etc...

Over the following few pages there is the beginnings of a moot rhythm of life, based around what we shared with each other in February. Out of all those questionnaires has emerged the things that we value most about moot, and what we find most helpful about moot for our Christian journey. I have then begun to group these under a few headers. This is not to say that the rhythm is now finished, but rather that we now have a rough ideas of what we as a community are about and how we as a community journey together. This naturally forms the basis of our rhythm. You can also see which phrases/words were used the most in what people said, as well as some of the metaphors they used about moot and the time when people joined.

Moot data

most used words/phrases (biggest text = most occurrences)

community of friends

acceptance/ability to be ones self

safe space to question and

encounter god

journeying together not alone

creative worship/creativity

use of the arts

ancient/future faith

connects with the Christian tradition

the arts and worship

urban spirituality

the desire for balance in life/community

eucharist services

the diversity

gender balance

55% male 45% female

Year People joined moot

2003 17 people

2004 8 people

2005 12 people

some quotes

'a place I can call home'

'a safe place for me to be me'

'somewhere to journey with God'

metaphors for moot

home, a family trip, the trinity, a Jackson Pollock painting, stew (good solid assortment of food),

We live the moot rhythm of life through presence, acceptance, creativity, balance, accountability and hospitality

presence

We commit to journeying together with God and each other. By meeting together as a community, in worship, friendship, grief, happiness and being a hopeful sign of an open community in the city rather than just a group of individuals or anonymous people.

acceptance

We desire to accept people as they are, and to allow people to say what they believe without fear of judgment. We want create a safe space where people feel at home, where people feel welcomed. We hope to learn from all those in and outside the community.

creativity

We wish to be creative in our worship, in prayer, in our lives/lifestyles, in learning, and with the christian tradition, in our theology and with the arts. We want to have an open approach to how we learn, live and encounter God in the plurality of the city.

balance

We commit to try and live simply in the city, striving for balance between work, rest, play. We wish to develop healthy spiritual disciplines such as daily prayer, meditation and comtemplation, drawing on the ancient Christian paths. We want to resist getting caught up in the 'rat race', or in living beyond our means, instead wanting to live sustainable lives. We desire to not simply be consumers, but people committed to giving and receiving in all of life.

accountability

We desire to be accountable to one another, to grow and journey together, listening to each other for wisdom rather than just trusting ourselves. We want to have a willingness to share life, rather than to privatize it and we want to commitment to try and walk together in a deep way rather than as strangers who only know the surface of each other.

hospitality

We wish to welcome all who come who we come across, when we are gathered and when we are dispersed. We wish as a community and as individuals to extends Christ's gracious invitation to relationship, meaning and life in all its fullness through our deeds, words and thoughts.

Questions for here and to take away

1. Does what you have read here represent what you heard and said during the meeting in February?
2. Does anything worry you about the suggested elements for a moot rhythm of life and if so why?
3. What excites you about the proposed elements and why?
4. At the moment the headings are made up of what we already try and do as a community, is there anything that should be added in that we wish to do, or have vision for?