

Rule of Life

Introduction

As moot continues to grow and attract new people and as we continue to try to connect our faith with our world and our urban city context, we need as a community to be able to grow and travel together. Following a rule would allow us to do just this. It gives us direction, orientating us for life, acting like a compass for our community.

The idea of adopting a rule of life has been inspired in part by the monastic idea of the *conversatio morum* (conversion of life) that is converting one's life to follow Christ. The idea of the *conversatio morum* follows in the footsteps of the first apostles, and echoes Christ's call to them to 'come and follow me.' (Matthew 4.18-22). The offering of oneself to God, to travel the narrow way, as exemplified in the community we see in Acts 2.32-47. Perhaps the best way to understand this is the simple text we find in Mark 8.34-8, summed up as a call to deny oneself, take up the cross and follow Christ.

Following a rule does not mean that we are bound to it; it is a guideline, an ideal, something that exemplifies what we want moot and ourselves to be, not a book to beat you over the head with if you don't follow every letter. It is not something that should scare us into change, but rather it should be something that inspires us as individuals and as a community to want to follow in the way of Christ today.

The following is a first draft of what a moot rule of life may look like. Please take your time to read and reread it. There are seven headings, and under each are clusters of words that are associated with that section followed by a paragraph or two on that area. Hopefully there will be much you like, after all, not much of it should surprise us given that all the ideas for each section come from our community.

We want to allow plenty of opportunity for feedback and discussion before we go any further, the first of which will be next Sunday evening. We would also appreciate comments by email which you can send to gareth.powell@fairadsl.co.uk We will discuss how we would implement any rule of life in our community once we have all had chance to look at this draft rule and respond with our comments.

Mission

Hospitality | Impactfulness | Commitment to those Spiritually Searching | Inculturated | Charismatic | Justice | Ecology | Commitment to Marginalised and Poor | Action/Praxis

We are looking for our community to be a place where all are welcomed. Hospitality to those who are spiritually searching is at the core of who we are; recognising that when we welcome others we welcome Christ himself into our midst. We desire that our lives and homes be full of this same hospitality and openness to the stranger. Food has a special place in this welcoming; it has a way of reaching across boundaries and drawing people together who may not have previously met or even desired to meet.

We are each called to represent Christ in our daily lives, being lights in a world that is frequently abusive and oppressive to many. As a community, we desire to reach out to those on the margins of society with the love and welcome of Christ. This may be through acts of kindness or particular services or ministries – in doing so we are desiring to be like Christ in breaking society's tendency to fragment into the 'haves' and 'have nots'. We are also aware of our place in the world; we are privileged to live in the prosperous West and we are ourselves partakers in a system that can often oppress

those with the least in life. We are committed to taking action for justice and for peace in the world in both as a community and in our daily lives, in the products we buy etc.

We also recognise that humanity has, in the last century, done enormous damage to our planet. Industrialisation, nuclear proliferation and our society's enormous consumer waste have each had a negative impact on the world around us. An important aspect of mission is having an ecological outlook on life; being aware of how we waste, and what we waste, and having a willingness to minimise our waste, as well as campaigning for more ecological energy sources to be explored. Creation is a gift to all: humans, animals, plants etc. We need to see our place in this delicate ecosystem.

We also recognise the work of the Spirit amongst God's people, giving us strength for the journey, a timely word, enabling us to live effective lives and empowering us to be witnesses to a new way of life.

Balance

Sustainability | Rest | Holistic Health | Relational Balance

In a world that demands a lot of us — in the workplace, in the home, travelling to see friends and family — time can seem like a scarce commodity. Yet, we all need stillness as well as busyness. Jesus himself, whilst busy healing the sick, teaching the disciples and eating with friends, sought out the quiet spaces where he could rest and spend time alone with God and his own inner thoughts. Without rest, we risk burning out & breaking down. The body has a habit of reminding us of the need to rest, and we ignore this at our peril. Take regular time out, block out a day or maybe an evening a week and rest; spend time just being. If God rested after 6 days work how much more do we need to?

We also need to take care of our bodies, learning to eat and drink in moderation not excess. Keeping ourselves healthy may not seem particularly spiritual but maintaining our health is an important part of a holistic view of spirituality and life lived with God.

Our relationships with others are important too. Sometimes we can develop unhealthy relationships that can cause ourselves or others to be a drain of energy and time. Learning to develop relationships that are healthy, built on trust, and are mutually accountable, is an important part of Christian life. Finding those we can trust, those who can disciple and challenge us, is also a good way to allow us to grow more Christlike in our character. You may want to consider joining a moot prayer group where you can meet with people regularly and talk, pray and grow together.

Virtues

covenant | fidelity | honesty | openness | generosity | humility | commitment | giving and taking | provisionality/holding lightly | ownership | permission giving

Motivated by our love for Christ and the living hope we have in God, we seek to live in a way that embodies the character of God.

As we grow in our relationship with God through time spent in God's presence we long to know more of the fruits of the Spirit — love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self control — embodied in our own lives. We desire that people would see something of Christ in who we are and how we live our lives. This growth takes

place in the context of community where God is at work in everyone and where we are all at different places on this journey.

In humility we desire to walk side by side with each other – encouraging each other to know God in a deeper way, whilst giving permission for people to be who they are. This can sometimes feel challenging and even painful, but fosters an environment of love and acceptance. This in turn will encourage open and honest friendships to develop where each member of the community can experience what it is to support and to be supported, giving and taking, as they are able.

As God has covenanted his faithfulness to us, we too are called to live covenanted lives that are committed to God and each other. We desire to be a community that genuinely feels a sense of ownership for every aspect of our lives together. As God has been, and continues to be, generous with each of us, we too look to be generous with each other – showing grace, not judgement; holding our ideas lightly and being open to other opinions; being generous and sacrificial with our time, finances, friendships and hospitality.

Learning

Encouraging Creativity | Knowing God | History | Praxis | Holistic Life | Different Learning Styles

Creativity is part of everyone's life, whether we are conscious of it or not. Creativity helps us everyday to solve problems that we may face, brings spontaneity, fun, and character to us as God created us, and we want to encourage that side of us as best we can.

We also want to increase our knowledge of God, the history of who God is and has been, theologically, historically and experientially. We want to be conscious of our history - the story of moot as a group and as individuals is about where we come from, how we came to know each other, how we relate, the history of Christianity, our story of God and how we fit into it.

We are attempting to make sure that our actions, our practice, are right according to our conscience before God to the best of our knowledge. Wanting to live a life that makes sense as a whole, adds up, has consistency, that it is not contradictory, or hypocritical, and where our actions and thinking are non-dualistic.

We recognize that everyone thinks and learns differently, and as we try to develop, we respect and encourage both our own style of learning and other people's styles of learning.

Worship

Sacrament | Charismatic | Contemplative Awareness

As a Christian community, worshipping God is at the heart of what we do – both corporately in our services, and individually in every part of our daily lives. God is at work in the world through the Holy Spirit and we should acknowledge this presence and look for God in the everyday as well as in church. There is, however, a strong element of mystery in the way God works; we realize that we may not always be able to see and understand how God is working.

We have a faith that has a long history and we value the riches of that heritage: ancient liturgy, symbolism and the sacraments – which are an important part of our worship. We want to draw on these and recontextualize them for our contemporary culture and the future.

We seek to develop contemplative awareness – listening to God, spending time in silence in God’s presence and learning to see ourselves and the world around us as God sees them, without allowing our own prejudices to colour our view.

Community

Hospitality | Other People | Relational | Communal Sustainability | Unity | Diversity
Inclusive | Non-hierarchical | Belonging Without Believing | Relationship to the wider church | Accountability and Mentoring (internal and external) | Non-Judgmental Support | Submission to God & Group | Group Discernment | Covenant

Moot is a spiritual community of friends living in an urban context. We are co-journeying post-modern pilgrims seeking God in our collective lives. In this way, we are being counter-cultural, as individualism is the cultural norm. We seek to shift from being individualistic spiritual tourists to becoming a diverse relational community of pilgrims. We desire to include and to be hospitable to all we come across, and in particular the stranger who we may meet along the way. Our community seeks to be a place of spiritual exploration that includes those who have a Christian faith as well as those who seek to belong but may not yet believe. Individually we are challenged by the call to generosity and accountability to God and members of the group; to live out unity in diversity, and to commit to each other as a form of covenant. As friends we seek to be non-hierarchical in the way we relate, where all have roles, where leadership is a matter of function and not of power. To be such a community requires the input of all to make it sustainable, and to discern of God how it should develop. In so doing, we are an accountable community within the tradition of the Anglican Church and each member can have access to mentoring, spiritual direction and support as required.

Spiritual Disciplines

Intentionally seeking time with God | Practice the presence of God | Meditation | Listening to God | Thirst for God | Prayer | Self-Discipline | Knowing God | Openness to encountering God in different ways

One part of growing as a Christian is about being disciplined about patterning a spiritual way of life. A shift from only knowing ‘facts about God’, to knowing God through experience, a balance that includes intentional times of intimacy and listening to God. These spiritual activities need to be learnt and do not come easily, and so require time and self-discipline. The first of these is prayer, which can be in a number of forms: individual or group, silent or aloud, word based or activity based. The second is practising the presence of God, listening to God through all the senses through different forms of meditation or contemplation, word based, activity based or image based. Such an openness to encountering God in different ways, will be spiritually nourishing and in turn create a thirst for God. It will also resource our ongoing journey with God, giving us strength in times of crisis and need, whilst also ensuring that our spiritual life does not just depend on moot services and gatherings but continues beyond them.