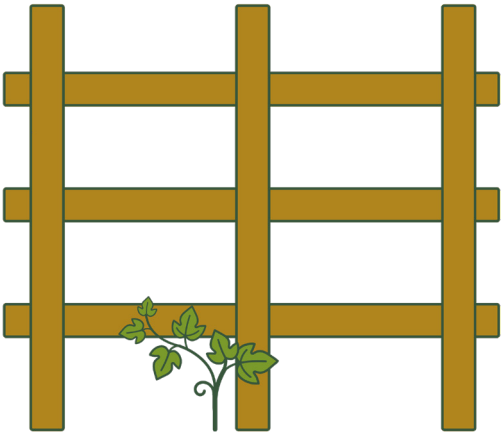
Diocese of Hereford
FLOURISHING TOGETHER
Season of Renewal



SESSION ONE

Planting, rooting, abiding

AIM: Today we reflect on our spiritual rootedness

This course explores how a Rule of Life can shape and inspire our Christian living as an intentional framework of practices and rhythms designed to support spiritual growth, balance, and connection with God. In Acts 2: 42-47, we see how the first Christians ordered their life keeping essential spiritual practices. The word 'rule' derives from the Latin *regula,* meaning a trellis or lattice. Without a trellis, a vine grows wild and produces less fruit; with it, it grows in a specific direction. Just as a wooden trellis supports a vine for maximum fruitfulness, a Rule of Life clarifies priorities, helping to prevent burnout and foster a healthier, more focused way of living. A Rule of Life is a tool that helps us flourish as Christians helping us to shape and structure life, cultivating spiritual, emotional, and physical health, balancing prayer and worship, work, relationships, and rest. A Rule should be a *minimum* of spiritual practice—doable even in the busiest week—not a maximalist vision. It celebrates the essentials and clarifies our intentions and deepest concerns. This course will help you re-evaluate your priorities and re-assess your walk with God.

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. Abide in me, as I also abide in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must abide in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in me.' *John 15:1-4*

REFLECTION

In our trellis, the *vertical timbers* are the pillars which give the essential support: Prayer, Worship, Study. The *horizontal timbers* are reaching out, encouraging us to Share, Engage, Grow. In John 15: Jesus asks us to stay and he asks us to go! '**Abide**' - stay, wait, linger, remain, stand your ground. '**Go and Bear Fruit**' 'You did not choose me but I chose you. Go and bear fruit (John 15:16). Jesus now commands his disciples to move out.

QUESTIONS

1. How does the interplay between doing and being, action and stillness, play out in your life? How do you observe sabbath rest?
2. Do you detect any signs of stress in your life? What might this be telling you about taking another look at your spiritual practice?
3. What would you consider the essentials and basics of Christian life, things vital and indispensable to Christian growth?
4. What biblical examples can you recall who model the paradox of stillness and movement? (eg. Elijah 1 Kings 19:1-18, Mary: Luke 2:19,51; John 2:1).



PRAYER EXERCISE

On a piece of paper draw a personal 'timeline' to recall transitions you have faced in your life, times of upheaval and change, and times of stability. Draw a horizontal line and mark it into the decades of your life. Above the line, note major events, happy and sad. Below the line, note how you felt then. Give thanks for God's providence.