

## Week 2.



- What might this bunch of grapes symbolise?
- Read John 15:1-8
- A Rule of Life can be a flexible framework similar to that supporting the growing vine.
- What does it mean to abide / live in Christ?
- What might it mean for us to be 'pruned' as a vine is often pruned?
- How well connected to the vine are you?
- What can be done to strengthen your connection?
- Consider Rublev's icon of the Trinity opposite. Imagine yourself as an invited guest at the table. How do you respond - to the invitation, being a part of the group, sharing in God's love?
- How might loving ourselves enable us to better love others?
- How might using some of the Spiritual Exercises, overleaf, help us grow closer to God? Consider making one or more of them part of a personal Rule of Life.
- Spend a few moments in silent prayer before closing with the Grace.



### A Personal Rule of Life

## Loving, God & Self, Family & Friends



©

# How might the Spiritual Disciplines help me to fulfil my calling?

Here they are summarised in the words of Richard Foster; his book is full of practical suggestions, as is Dallas Willard's 'The Spirit of the Disciplines' (HarperCollins, 1991).

## THE INWARD DISCIPLINES

### The Discipline of Meditation

'The purpose of meditation is to enable us to hear God more clearly. Meditation is listening, sensing, heeding the life and light of Christ. This comes right to the heart of our faith. The life that pleases God is not a set of religious duties; it is to hear his voice and obey his word. Meditation opens the door to this way of living...

...In the Discipline of meditation we are not so much acting as we are opening ourselves to be acted upon. We invite the Holy Spirit to come and work within us – teaching, cleansing, comforting, rebuking.' (p.37)

### The Discipline of Prayer

'In prayer, real prayer, we begin to think God's thoughts after him: to desire the things he desires, to love the things he loves, to will the things he wills. Progressively, we are taught to see things from his point of view.' (p.43)

'Listening to God is the necessary prelude to intercession. The work of intercession, sometimes called the prayer of faith, presupposes that the prayer of guidance is perpetually ascending to the Father. We must hear, know, and obey the will of God before we pray it into the lives of others. The prayer of guidance constantly precedes and surrounds the prayer of faith.' (p.48)

### The Discipline of Fasting

'Throughout Scripture fasting refers to abstaining from food for spiritual purposes.' (p.61)

'The central ideal in fasting is the voluntary denial of an otherwise normal function for the sake of intense spiritual activity.' (p.73)

### The Discipline of Study

'The apostle Paul tells us that we are transformed through the renewal of the mind (Rom. 12:2). The mind is renewed by applying it to those things that will transform it.

'Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, *think* about these things' (Phil. 4:8, [italics added]). The Discipline of study is the primary vehicle to bring us to '*think* about these things.'" (p.78)

'The principal task of study is a perception into the reality of a given situation, encounter, book, etc.' (p.80)

