



# MAKING A 'RULE OF LIFE'

by the Rev'd David Runcorn

## **Starting from the heart.**

A rule of life is a chosen commitment to a personal or corporate shape of living. It provides us with a practical structure to help us to live based on those values and beliefs that are most important to us. It helps us, under God, to take responsibility and to be accountable for the way we live. So a starting place may be the question

'What is most important to me?'

What do I want for my life and those I share it with? What are my core values – those moral, social and spiritual convictions that are non-negotiable and that I wish my life to be fashioned around?

## **Developing a personal mission statement.**

What areas might your mission statement include? This must be, in the best sense, a thoroughly worldly exercise. It is not to be narrowed to a private set of religious or church centred disciplines. It involves the

whole of our living and being human. How we pray is intimately connected to how we live. We are seeking the core principles that shape all our relating – to family, partner, ourselves, church, work, our enemies, our friends, possessions, money and time. An example is given on the back page.

As a way of beginning to detect your core values try this exercise, making notes in the space provided:

Imagine you have died and at your funeral three people share their memories of you: a member of our family, a colleague at work and a close friend. What would you most want them to remember you for?

Family
Colleague
Friend

### **A personal rule of life**

You might find it helpful to use a Rule of Life chart like the example printed on the next page. You may wish to adapt the categories. For example someone with school age children may well find the shape of their year is shaped more significantly around term times and holidays rather than regular weeks and months. In each box you are invited to make a time commitment. Where appropriate you might also suggest what point of day or week your commitment might be fulfilled. It is important to be aware of when your energies are freshest or at their lowest in the day for example. Where possible this should influence the choices you make for your use of time.

	Personal	Family	Friends	Work	Church	Leisure
Daily						
Weekly						
Monthly						
Annually						

### An example of a personal mission statement

*(These are extracts from the mission statement a woman with a dual vocation to working career and family life. She is seeking to sustain a faithful and creative relationship between them.)*

I will seek to balance career and family as best I can since both are important to me.

My home will be a place where I am my family, friends, and guests find joy, comfort, peace and happiness.

I will exercise wisdom in what we choose to eat, read, see and do at home. I especially want my children to love, to learn, and to laugh – and to work and develop their unique talents.

I will be a concerned and responsible citizen, involved in political process to ensure my voice is heard and my vote is counted.

I will act on situations and opportunities rather than be acted upon.

I will try to keep myself free from addictive and destructive habits. I will develop habits that free me from old labels and limits and expand my capabilities and choices.

My money will be my servant, not my master. My wants will be subject to my needs and my means.

Except for long-term home and car loans, I will seek to keep myself free from consumer debt. I will spend less than I earn.

I will use what money and talents I have to make life more enjoyable for others through service and charitable giving.