

THE LAITY

We recognize that we are called by God into the family of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and through Baptism made a member of Christ's family. The basic plan for our life within the Church is outlined in the "Rule of Life" (The Book of Common Prayer - page 555) as follows:

Every Christian man or woman should from time to time frame for him/herself a Rule of Life in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel and the faith and order of the church; wherein he/she may consider the following:

- *The regularity of attendance at public worship and especially at the Holy Communion*
- *The practice of private prayer, Bible reading, and self-discipline*
- *Bringing the teaching and example of Christ into everyday life*
- *The boldness of his/her spoken witness to his/her faith in Christ*
- *Personal service to the Church and the community*
- *The offering of money according to his/her means for the support of the work of the Church at home and overseas*

In considering the application of the "Rule of Life," the following should be specifically considered by individuals. Parish programs should be framed in such a way as to enable the laity to exercise their ministry in the following ways:

1. God has endowed each person with particular gifts to be used for the benefit of the whole family of God. The individual must be enabled to develop and use these gifts in carrying out his/her share of the responsibility for the ministry of the Church.
2. The laity are called by God to be the primary agents of witness, service, and evangelism. As such, they must be prepared to accept and share teaching in the faith and training for ministry.
3. The laity have the responsibility to take leadership in such areas as outreach, visitation, teaching, organization and finance within the church.
4. The primary focus of the ministry of the laity shall be toward the extension of God's Kingdom in family, community and society, rather than maintenance of programs.
5. The people of God are called to share in leadership and worship, and in the proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel both within the Church and in society.

6. The people of God have responsibility to share (with other laity and clergy) in all aspects of the ministry, except those conferred specifically by Ordination.
7. The people of God are ministers of Jesus Christ by virtue of their Baptism, and that ministry is exercised in the world in cooperation with the local parish.
8. A baptized individual witnesses for Christ wherever he or she happens to be, but all action should take into consideration what is best for the life of the local parish so that the unity of the Body of the Church is maintained.

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