



# Ritual Action

Week 3

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## Value: GRATITUDE

**Practice:** Before going to sleep each night, consciously let go of three hurts and/or angers of the day. Give them over to God. When you awake in the morning, before getting out of bed, take inventory of what you are grateful for and say “thank you” to God for three of them.

## Value: FORGIVENESS

**Practice:** Write a letter to someone you are struggling to forgive. State clearly what the injury is, why it still hurts, and why it is difficult to forgive. Do not send the letter. Instead, imagine lifting up this difficulty and giving it to God. Either crumple the letter and throw it away. Or burn it (carefully) and scatter its ashes.

## Value: COMPASSION

**Practice:** Ponder this Saying from the Desert Fathers.... *Some men came to Abba Poemen and said to him, " We see some of the brothers falling asleep during divine worship. Should we wake them?" He said, "As for me, when I see a brother who is falling asleep during the Divine Office, I lay his head on my knees and let him rest."* Each day this week, consider a past situation, or one that is ongoing, and how you might be less critical or judgmental, and instead offer compassion. How might this change things, for the better?

## Value: GENEROSITY

**Practice:** Make it a habit to do something nice, something extra, for someone – a coworker, friend, family member, neighbor, stranger, or an enemy – at least once a day. Notice how you feel throughout the week, and how people respond. If it is helpful, write down your observations and reflections.

## Value: JUSTICE

**Practice:** Consider this passage from the Hebrew Scriptures – Amos 5:24: *Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness an ever-flowing stream. Read it every day this week.* Let it be God’s word to you. Where is justice needed in the world today? How do you understand the prophet’s words? Do they change anything for you and how you understand the world around you? Why or why not? Reflect on your responses, or write down your thoughts, and/or discuss with a trusted friend.

## Value: TRUST

**Practice:** Pray the Lord’s Prayer. Which petition in the prayer most resonates with you today? Why? What role does trust in God play as you consider this petition? How does this petition speak to you personally as a 21<sup>st</sup>-century Christian living in the U.S.A. Repeat the process each day of the week. Use the same petition, until it finds a home in your heart, or choose the one that speaks to you in the moment.

**Value: PEACE**

**Practice:** Fast from technology – television, phone, internet – for at least 30 minutes a day. Perhaps you'll work your way up to 60 minutes each day. An hour before bedtime is a good time, experts say.

Replace technology time with reading, conversing with a loved one, playing a board game, participating in an outdoor activity, listening to music, or.... Notice how you feel throughout the week, and if it is helpful, write down your observations and reflections about how you spent your time away from technology.

**Value: DISCERNMENT**

**Practice:** Fast from words – unnecessary talking, hurtful words, arguments, lengthy explanations, defensiveness. Be concise. Say only what needs to be said. One of the key admonitions of the Desert Fathers and Mothers was “guard your tongue” or “guard your mouth.” Notice how you feel throughout the week, and if it is helpful, write down your observations of yourself and others’ responses to your brevity.

**Value: KINDNESS**

**Practice:** Ponder this saying from *Jesus*, ‘As you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me’ (Matthew 25:40). Each day this week, consider a situation in which you responded with kindness. Recall how you felt, and if it is helpful, write down your remembrances. In what current or future situations might you offer kindness?

**Value: AWE**

**Practice:** Spend time in Creation this week. Open yourself to the beauty of the natural world. Walk, run, or sit and observe. At least 10 minutes per day, weather permitting. What do you notice? What takes your breath away? If it is helpful, write down your observations and reflections.

**Value: HOSPITALITY**

**Practice:** Consider these words of Paul to the church at Rome, Romans 12:12-13... *Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.* Each day, read/reread this passage, then zero in on one of the phrases. Ponder it and let it be God’s word to you today. Over the course of the week, which phrase had the most meaning? The least? If it is helpful, write down your observations or reflections. Each day this week, consider a situation in which you extended hospitality. Recall how you felt, and if it is helpful, write down your remembrances. In what current or future situations might you offer hospitality?

**Value: NON-JUDGING**

**Practice:** Ponder this Saying from the Desert Fathers.... *Some men came to Abba Poemen and said to him, " We see some of the brothers falling asleep during divine worship. Should we wake them?" He said, "As for me, when I see a brother who is falling asleep during the Divine Office, I lay his head on my knees and let him rest."* Each day this week, consider a past situation, or one that is ongoing, and how you might be less critical or judgmental, and instead offer compassion. How might this change things? If it is helpful, write down your reflections.

**Value: COMMUNITY**

**Practice:** Friendship. “Make new friends, but keep the old....” Each day, make sure to reach out to a long-time friend, perhaps to check in, to talk, or to spend time together. As a bonus, reach out to someone who is new in town, new to your church, or a new parent at your children’s school – just to say “hi” and “I’d like to get to know you.” Notice how you feel throughout the week, reaching out to others, and if it is helpful, write down your observations or reflections.