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Title: Week 5 - Weekly and Yearly Rhythms and Values

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Introduction

- OK, so last week I started like this...saying the first three weeks was more “What we believe”
 - And flowing from “What we believe” as a church - now until the end of the semester is “What we do” as a church
 - * Last week we talked about Life Groups and we got that started
 - This week - I want to talk about a Yearly and Weekly Rhythm and our Values as a church
 - * So I hope this gives us a chance to see and understand some big picture things about us a church...that there’s an intentionality behind all that we do

1. Yearly Rhythm

Biblical principles

- Now one thing that I think is significant to think about is that God created a physical world and created human beings to operate inside of rhythms
 - Think about it right - the orbit of the earth creates days and seasons and years
 - And human beings - we need sleep and we operate on daily rhythms
 - * And so it is always wise and good to consider God’s design and how to live within and leverage those boundaries for our good and blessing
- And as we look at the Old Testament Israelites - God instituted various rhythms for them - both weekly and annually for them to operate in for the good and blessing
- So let’s consider their annual feasts first
 - 1. Feast of Passover - March/April
 - 2. Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) - May/June
 - 3. Feast of Tabernacles - Sept/Oct
- And there are other celebrations that came later in Israel’s history (Purim, Hanukkah) and then there are feasts done every 7 years (Sabbath Year Feasts) and every 50 years (Jubilee Feasts)
- And the point is - God ordained special times in the year for His people to remember
- Now does that mean we are bound to these feasts as Christians or required to have certain celebrations or rhythms?
 - No we see that these Feasts found their ultimate fulfillment in Christ - so there’s not some ceremonial requirement to keep any feast...and again I talked about this before...even some would argue the weekly Sabbath itself is fulfilled in Christ
 - * BUT, even if that was the case - there is great wisdom and blessing we as New Testament Christians can experience from living inside of weekly and yearly rhythms for the sake of spiritual and physical renewal

JOAN application

- So we also want to operate on rhythms to help us to be as spiritual vibrant as possible as a church

- So as a church with a lot of families with children in schools - naturally our lives bend towards the rhythms of the school calendar - and so I generally like thinking of Fall semester, Winter Break, Spring semester, and Summer time
- And so here is the big picture of our rhythms

Season	Weekly Rhythm	Special Event
Winter (mid-Dec to mid-Jan)	Church Gathered - "Sunday" 1. Corporate prayer 2. Corporate worship Church Scattered - "Monday-Saturday" 1. Spheres of love	Dec 31 - Watch Night Service
Spring (mid-Jan to mid-May)	Church Gathered - "Sunday" 1. Corporate prayer 2. Sunday School 3. Corporate worship Church Scattered - "Monday-Saturday" 1. Spheres of love 2. Life Groups	Spring - Night of Worship
Summer (mid-May to mid-August)	Church Gathered - "Sunday" 1. Corporate prayer 2. Corporate worship 3. Church-wide Fellowship Church Scattered - "Monday-Saturday" 1. Spheres of love	Summer Congregational Retreat
Fall (mid-August to mid-Dec)	Church Gathered - "Sunday" 1. Corporate prayer 2. Sunday School 3. Corporate worship Church Scattered - "Monday-Saturday" 1. Spheres of love 2. Life Groups	

- **Winter**
 - Winter Break - we'll discontinue Sunday School and Life Groups during that time
 - Key festival so to speak to point out is the Watch Night Service
 - * The plan for that is to gather at night for a service where it might be something like this:
 - 10pm-10:45pm - An open time of prayer
 - 10:45pm-11:15pm - Testimonies
 - 11:15pm-12:15am - Worship Service
 - 12:15pm-1am - Fellowship
 - * And we are working on securing a location for this service - may be able to do it here
 - Now, why would we do something like this?

- * Now some of you may have New Years Eve parties and that's fine - and there's no requirement to come to this, but we'd of course encourage that
- * But, Watch Night Services are what many Indian Christians grew up with and even my previous church (largely Korean) had this service as well
 - And so one thing to consider is as a church that is seeking to be the Joy of ALL NATIONS - while a lot of Western church cultures may value being out of church on New Years Eve...a lot of non-Western cultures value using that night to be in prayer and worship and use it as a night to reflect, give thanks, and make new commitments for the new year
- * Now, some of you are also going to ask - what in the world do I do with my kids?
 - And I'd say a lot of people brought their kids to service
 - And a lot of kids would be asleep in their chairs - and that's 100% OK
 - And yes their bedtime can get messed up, but we believe the Lord can bless our children and teach them the importance of giving the Lord our new year
 - But then also know, sometimes one spouse would come to church and another would stay at home with the kids
 - So you have liberty to choose what is best
- **Spring**
 - ◉ We will have our regular rhythms - and we'll end Life Groups probably mid-May (around graduation time)...and in terms of Sundays we'll transition to a summer rhythm starting Memorial Day probably
 - ◉ But sometime in May - we don't have the date settled yet, but maybe on a Friday night we'll have a Night of Worship with some extended time to worship, to pray, and possibly a guest speaker
 - * And the hope here is - we are ending a school year, preparing for the summer - so similarly we want to reflect with thanks and also look to the summer season with prayer
- **Summer**
 - ◉ This is open to change, but Sundays I am thinking we'd not have Sunday School and instead opt for more church-wide fellowship after service - potlucks maybe, playing at the park, etc.
 - * And with the hope that since we aren't doing Life Groups - that the summer can be a time for people throughout the church getting to know each other
 - ◉ Here's the big thing I'd like us to do in the summer though is a Congregational Retreat
 - * Again, some of you may have done this in your church, but I've noticed congregational retreats especially being important amongst Ethnic minorities
 - And different ones have different purposes
 - * But here's my thought of the purpose for JOAN
 - 1. Summer fun and fellowship
 - I am thinking about doing it July 4 weekend - part of why, is at least for us that's not usually a holiday we celebrate with family and so people may enjoy using the holiday to be with your church family and enjoy that weekend together

- My hope is the retreat will include fun, play, water and almost becomes like one of your family vacations built in
- 2. Preparation for the new year
 - Even though the new school year is in August - I want us to give us time to look ahead to that time
 - And one of the things I appreciated at retreats I went to was called “Retreat of Silence” where we had like 3-4 hours alone to pray and retreat and journal - I would love to give time for that...and probably for married couples with children - give a separate time for husbands and for wives
 - And here is where I’d introduce a discipleship tool where its an Annual Reflection Guide - and ask people to evaluate and look ahead with new commitments
- * Now, I’d love during the discussion time to ask - would you rather pick another time than July 4? We definitely can - I’m not married to that by any means
- **Fall**
 - I think the thing to be aware of is especially because after the summer is a new school year and often times there are new families that have moved into town
 - * I think we’d see the Fall as really our new ministry year and kicking things off
 - And we'd have our regular rhythms of Sunday School and then Life Groups through the Fall

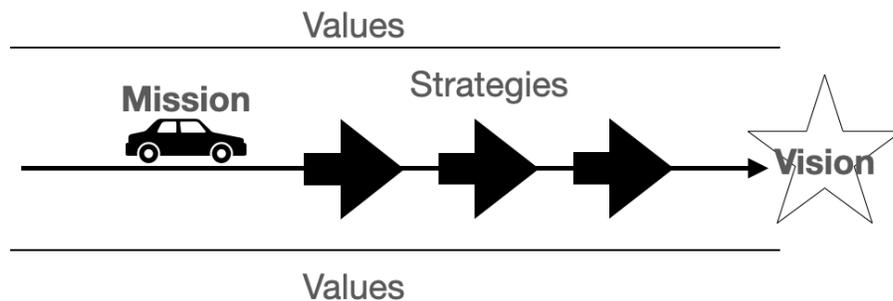
2. Weekly Rhythm

- And I’ll share personally - that at my previous church - we had a VERY BUSY church life
 - Sunday worship, Sunday Missions Prayer Meeting, Morning Prayer M-F (630-730am), weekly SG (M/T/W), Wed Night Prayer (10pm-3am), Thurs Night Prayer (7-9pm), Friday Night LG (7-10pm), Saturday leaders meeting (8am-12pm)
 - * And then lots of retreats and Lock-Ins and as a pastor this doesn’t include a lot of other meetings I needed to be at
 - But yeah, I learned a lot and God was definitely at work - but goodness, that was way too much
- But it was interesting going from that to Perimeter and especially living in a COVID world
 - Now because of COVID - even going to church on Sundays was growing more rare for people
 - And then doing SGs stopped for a lot or went to Zoom, but then people got tired of that
 - * And so...the general commitment to church life in the COVID world went WAY DOWN
 - Now thankfully, I think people are feeling isolated and ready to re-engage again in church...so we have an opportunity
 - * BUT, I do think there’s almost church meeting muscles that need to get re-used again that have kind of atrophied for people
- So anyway - personally I would like to have a church in JOAN that
 - Avoids the extreme of CFC that had way too many church commitments...and people had little time for their family, for work, and for being in evangelistic relationships

- But also want to avoid the extreme of the COVID Church...where people are barely committed to anything in church
- And so language I've heard from people is saying a healthy rhythm is "Sunday +1"
- And so generally speaking that's what I want to try and do in JOAN as much as possible
 - A healthy church member is committed to Sunday and plus one other commitment during the week and that is going to be Life Group
- But on Sundays - we have 3 things going on...corporate prayer, Sunday school, and corporate worship
 - We think all those are important, but if you had to pick one - we'd want you to choose corporate worship
 - And in future weeks I'll talk about each of those elements in detail
- And then Life Groups of course during the week - I already talked about that last week so I won't labor that point

3. Values

- Now, I want to go over our church values
 - Honestly this is something I wanted to go over earlier during Vision and Mission, but I just ran out of time
- But let me show this diagram again - to help us understand "Values"



- If Vision is the destination and Mission is our car or engine to get there
 - * Values are the boundaries of the road...we stay within - meaning...we want to accomplish our vision - but we don't violate our values to get there - the ends doesn't justify the means...the means matter
 - * Another way to think about values is "corporately personality" - if someone walks through our doors
 - They might hear our Vision and Mission - but likely they won't

- BUT what they will FEEL...is our values...they'll taste this, experience this... because our personality will come out - its the first thing people experience about a person and usually remember about a person
- ◉ And so what corporate personality would we desire to have?
 - * Now this might shift or change - as your personalities get integrated into the church... this all may shift
- ◉ But, obviously a lot of these are my own values and personality as a person and what I've valued in terms of leading ministries and churches I've been involved with
 - * And my hope is - you'd find these valuable yourselves - and we'd start to embody these things...so 5 values
- **1. Nuanced Mind**
 - ◉ *We value deep and nuanced thinking about God's Word and God's world*
 - ◉ OK, the longer you hear me preach or talk you'll notice that the word "nuance" is one of my favorite words
 - * I've always been more of a life is shades of grey than black and white for a while
 - ◉ And so, when it comes to issues of theology, life, wisdom, social issues (especially the last few years)
 - * I think what you'll find about me is - a willingness to speak about both sides of an issue and willing to live in healthy tensions
 - ◉ So, my prayer is that our minds here would be increasingly shaped to think deeply and with nuance about a variety of topics - because I think that is healthy and faithful to God and His Word as well
- **2. Beating Heart**
 - ◉ *We value experiencing and pursuing authentic joy in Christ.*
 - ◉ So in some sense the first value is the value of deep thinking...you can say the next value is the value of deep feeling
 - ◉ And this relates to the convictions about "Joy" and Christian Hedonism and John Piper's influence in my life
 - * But this desire to have a heart that beats with a passion for the Lord and His kingdom was there from long before in me
 - ◉ So, I really don't desire that we be a stoic church when it comes to the things of God
 - * When we speak of the Gospel and God's glory and salvation and grace - these things are infinitely precious and valuable and worthy of our hearts and even emotions being moved
 - Now I'm not saying you must cry with tears to be spiritual - how you express emotion is obviously up to you
 - * But if I were to cut you up - there's a heart that BEATS with passion for Christ
- **3. Healthy rest and work**
 - ◉ *We value healthy rhythms of rest and work in all of life.*
 - ◉ Now, I shared about my previous church experience at CFC - and now that's its own story - and I'd be happy to share that at some other time with you all
 - * But this value definitely comes out of that experience

- * And part of the desire to meet in homes is to show that we want to develop that sense that the church family is like our actual family - and I think that is much of the culture of the New Testament church
 - ◉ And I hope that in a world starved with loneliness - that newcomers and unbelievers would also be drawn in by that kind of family-like love
- **5. Burdened love**
 - ◉ *We value that our ethos will be that our people will be the type of people with a deep-seated burden and aching from the Holy Spirit to see souls and society transformed by the Gospel.*
 - ◉ What this means is there is a deep, deep aching in our hearts for people to be saved and for transformation in society to result from that
 - * I think some churches say they care for the lost, but honestly I wonder sometimes how much people care...how much people really believe there is a heaven and hell and that lost people are in danger of hell and how much that burdens us
 - ◉ So, one practical example would be this - that when we pray as a church, we definitely pray for the needs of the church and people's health...but I hope our most urgent and pressing prayers are for the lost to be saved
 - ◉ Another practical example is, we share in Life Groups about people we are reaching out to and want to invite to Community Week - that there is a deep anguish and aching and sometimes even tears for people to come and meet Christ
- Recap
 - ◉ **1. Nuanced mind** - be a deep thinking church, not extremes and memes and twitter...but lets be thoughtful
 - ◉ **2. Beating heart** - not just thinkers, but deep feelers...hearts beating with passion for Christ
 - ◉ **3. Healthy rest and work** - we don't come with faces with dark circles because we don't sleep and look grumpy...but also no shoulders slouched...stand up straight...and people see excellence in what we do
 - ◉ **4. Family relationships** - people here feel like, this is a family, not a business...I feel safe, loved, cared for - whether a believer or unbeliever
 - ◉ **5. Burdened love** - yes, we're a family...but we aren't insular...we are always looking outside the doors - the lost especially and with tears even we say - how we long for the lost be found
- Can we be that sort of church? Amen?
 - ◉ By the grace of God...I pray we will