



I recently finished re-reading The Benedictine Handbook. This is a manual written by St. Benedict of Nursia in the 6th Century that lays out how monks and nuns are to live. It's not terribly long – roughly 88 pages broken down into 73 chapters, and it covers topics from hospitality to diet to prayer to work to discipline and everything in-between.

It's thought that Benedict wrote The Rule in about 540, and almost 1500 years later it is still being used in monasteries and other contexts around the world.

One of the things that gives The Rule its staying power is its simplicity. Benedictine monks and nuns take a vow of “stability, amendment of life, and obedience.” Within that vow, and within the life of the monastery, is a simple balance of life that revolves around the body (dormitory, refectory, and grounds), mind (library), and soul (chapel). In seeking that balance, he divided the day up into neat sections of work, prayer, study, nourishment, and sleep.

In this Rule, everything matters, and God is at the center of everything – God is present in our work, in our play, in our hospitality, in our study, in our worship, and in everything we do.

We can get so busy with certain aspects of our lives that we get “out of balance.” This is not new to the 21st Century – it was something of which Benedict was aware close to 1500 years ago. It would behoove us to pay attention to The Rule, if not to join a monastery at least to pay attention to our lives. Do we have a good work/life balance? Are we getting enough sleep? Do we eat sensibly and regularly? Are we spending the same time in prayer as we are watching TV?

The list and examples of how we could obtain balance are as varied as the number of people reading this, but you are the only one who can decide what's appropriate. I would urge you, however, to examine your life and find that balance where God gets as much attention as your phone.

Blessings,

Todd+
