

WELCOME TO ...

# Living Well - Rhythms of Grace

Welcome to Living Well, Rhythms of Grace . My hope is that this resource will enable you to reflect on and explore what it might look like for you to live well and to walk in step with the unforced rhythms of grace that Jesus described in Matthew 11.

Rhythms of Grace was designed as a small group course with resources that enable groups to encourage and sharpen each other as you explore and journey together - but it also works well as a personal reflection tool.

Whether you are completing the course on your own, or in a group, for each of the 5 sessions there is a video to help bring some context and introduce the theme, as well as some questions to spark curiosity and get you thinking. You'll also find some practical resources and ideas to try along the way as you begin to consider what Living Well looks like for you!

The session plans will guide you through the session each week - but be flexible! If a particular question has really sparked interest and conversation - go with it and enjoy digging a little deeper. Equally, if there are questions that don't seem to float your boat - skip to something that does.

What it might look like to 'Live Well' will be different for different people in different contexts and in different stages of life. If you are completing the course as part of a group, let's be mindful of that in our conversation as we seek to encourage and champion each other. The activity suggestions each session are designed to give you ideas to help get you started - I encourage you to press in during the week between the sessions and try them out as you explore what works for you

Most of all, be curious and make space for God to draw your attention to areas in your life where He might be wanting to bring His grace and healing as He lovingly calls you to walk in step with Him and discover more of what it is to live freely and lightly - how exciting is that?!

Each session has 5 components:

## REVIVE

A moment to pause, to breathe, to settle our minds and our bodies and to invite Jesus into the space.

## RELATE

A space to gather, get to know each other and reflect on your journey from week to week

## REVIEW

Time to explore the theme of the session by watching the accompanying course videos

## REFLECT

An opportunity to reflect on the content of the video, through small group discussion, and to consider what it might look like to put that into practice

## RESPOND

A moment of quiet to reflect and respond  
You might find it helpful to use a journal during these times



Living Well was created by Lisa Campbell from Wonderful Me! For further information on the work of both Wonderful Me! and Living Well, head over to the [Wonderful Me! website](http://wonderfulme.org.uk), where you will also find further resources and support to enable you to explore what Living well might look like for you!

[wonderfulme.org.uk](http://wonderfulme.org.uk)

# SESSION 1

## Introducing Living Well

In this session we will begin to consider what it might mean to live well as we ask ourselves 'How am I?'

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me - watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.”

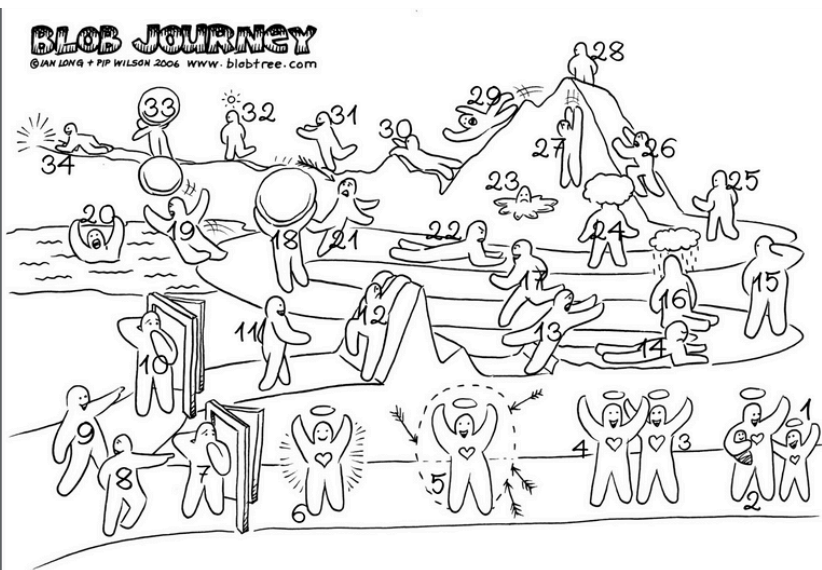
Matt 11:28-30 MSG

### REVIVE

Breathing Prayer - 'Be still and know that I am God' Psalm 46:10

### RELATE

- Introduce yourselves - Where are you from? What do you do? Who is in your household?
- Have a look at the Blob Journey - Which blob character best sums up where you feel you are at on your journey into well-being? Why did you choose that character?



### REVIEW

Watch the video - 'Session 1 - Introducing Living Well'

### RESPOND 1

Spend a few moments in quiet, reflecting on the question 'How are you?' as you complete the Whole Self Check-in Tool. You might like to have some quiet, reflective music playing as you do this

### REFLECT

- What stood out to you the most as you spent time completing the 'Whole Self Check-in'? Are there any areas you would like to celebrate? Are there any areas you would like to explore further?
- Read the passage from Matthew 11:28-30 (MSG) - perhaps someone could read it out loud. Is there a particular word or phrase that grabbed your attention?
- What might it look like when you are tired or burned out? Where do you feel stress in your body?
- What does well-being look like for you? What have you tried before to help look after yourself?

### RESPOND 2

What is your take home from today?  
Is there something you are going to do differently this week?  
Talk to God about it.

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# WHOLE SELF CHECK-IN TOOL

**'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'**

Mark 12:30

Have you checked in with yourself recently? How are you doing? That's not always an easy question to reflect on and answer - as people we are intricate and complex!!

In the bible verse above we read ancient wisdom that reminds us of that complexity as it names different aspects of our whole selves: our heart - our emotional life, our soul - our spiritual life, our mind - our mental thought life and our strength - our physical bodies.

In Psalm 139, we read of how we are knitted together in the womb by a loving God who weaves all of those parts of us together. As we have been able to learn more about our brains and our central nervous systems - science is helping us to understand that in a greater depth as we discover more and more of how those parts of ourselves intertwine. If we are going to care well for ourselves - we need to consider our whole selves.

Take some time to pause and be curious about each of those areas of your whole self - it might help to rate how you feel you are doing in each area on a scale of 1-5 by colouring in the stars below.

Then ... talk to God about it... As you invite God into each area of your life and share honestly with Him about how you feel, what comes to mind? What might He be wanting to reveal to you? Are you surprised by what He says?

## Emotional



How do I feel?  
Do I feel steady?  
Do I engage my emotions?  
Do I ignore them?

## Mental



How am I in my mind?  
What story am I telling myself?  
Am I able to concentrate?  
Do I feel peaceful?

## Spiritual



How am I doing spiritually?  
Do I feel connected to God?  
Do I take time to be still?  
What sharpens me?

## Physical



How do I feel?  
Am I sleeping well?  
Am I eating well?  
Do I exercise?



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## SESSION 2

# Sabbath



In this session we are digging into the rhythm of Sabbath as we explore how it continues to be as relevant today as when it was first introduced in the Old Testament. And we'll be considering what it might look like for us to carve out a day of rest each week.

“Sabbath is a deliberate act of interference, an interruption of our work each week, a decree of no-work so that we are able to notice, to attend, to listen, to assimilate this comprehensive and majestic work of God, to orient our work in the work of God.”

Eugene Peterson – Christ plays in 10,000 places

### REVIVE

Breathing Prayer

'In God alone my soul finds rest, my salvation comes from Him' - Psalm 62:1

### RELATE

- Last week we began to explore the unforced rhythms of grace that Jesus described in Matthew 11. Do you have any reflections as you have continued to think about this during the week?
- Is there something you have tried this week that you have found helpful?
- What does the word Sabbath mean to you? Have you heard of it before? What comes to mind when you hear the word? Does the word create any feelings in you?

### REVIEW

Watch the video - 'Session 2 - Sabbath'

### REFLECT

- Was there anything that stood out to you, particularly, as you watched the Video on Sabbath?
- Was there anything in the video that challenged your understanding of Sabbath?
- What are the things that might get in the way of a rhythm of Sabbath for you?
- What might it look like for you to celebrate Sabbath each week? Consider the 3 words mentioned in the video – Holy, Rest, Delight
- Read the top tips and ideas for Sabbath. Is there anything that might work for you?

### RESPOND

What is your take home from today?

Is there something you are going to do differently this week?

Is there something you are going to try out?

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## SESSION 2

# Sabbath - Top tips and Ideas



These are just a few ideas that we have tried as we have explored what Living Well looks like for us. Some may work for you, some may not - but hopefully it will give you a few ideas to kick start your own journey!

### HOLY

We start with a **Sabbath feast** and a short time of prayer!

We want to celebrate this Holy time - mark it out as special - and for us, any celebration involves food!

We **light a candle** to help us recognise that we are beginning a special time.

We start with **scripture** - often one of us will bring a short bible verse that has come to our attention during the week - again, we are human and the key here is short - everyone is ready for dinner!!

We **pray a blessing** on each other - there is a beautiful jewish tradition of parents praying a Sabbath blessing on their children that we heard about and wanted to include as part of our own celebration. We do it a little differently and each pray a very simple blessing on one other person - changing up who that person is each week.

We often **break bread** and share wine or squash together - usually we combine that with blessing prayers - passing around the cup as we pray.

And then we enjoy a lovely meal together!

### REST

We keep phones to one side rather than having them on our person at all times and we very much limit their use - no work emails etc.

We make sure all chores are done and out of the way before Sabbath kicks off.

We enjoy a slower pace of life - we go to bed early and enjoy a lovely Sabbath Sleep - we read a book for pleasure - it feels completely luxurious!! Like having a holiday day every week!!!

### DELIGHT

We try and keep the TV off unless we are choosing to watch a movie together - no boredom watching!

We take a lovely walk - we play family games ... 'Do something you love' is a bit of a Sabbath mantra for us!

*What is the first step you are going to take towards building a rhythm of Sabbath in your life this week?*

## SESSION 3

# Stillness



In this session we are exploring the rhythm of Stillness as we consider how we might punctuate our day with moments of stillness that help us 'stay our soul on God'.

“If you refuse to be hurried and pressed,  
If you stay your soul on God,  
Nothing can keep you from that clearness of spirit which is life and peace.  
In that stillness you will know what His will is.”  
- Any Carmichael

### REVIVE

Breathing Prayer

'Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in Him' - Psalm 62:5

### RELATE

- Last week we unpacked the rhythm of Sabbath. Do you have any reflections as you have continued to think about this during the week?
- Is there something you have tried this week that you have found helpful?
- What does the word Stillness mean to you? Does the word create any feelings in you?
- What does Stillness look like in your life?

### REVIEW

Watch the video - 'Session 3 - Stillness'

### REFLECT

- Was there anything that stood out to you, particularly, as you watched the Video on Stillness?
- Was there anything in the video that you found exciting / challenging or that resonated with you?
- What are the things that might get in the way of a rhythm of Stillness for you?
- What might it look like for you to punctuate your day with moments of Stillness?
- Read the top tips and ideas for Stillness. Is there anything that might work for you?

### RESPOND

What is your take home from today?  
Is there something you are going to do differently this week?  
Is there something you are going to try out?

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## SESSION 3

# Stillness - Top tips and Ideas



These are just a few ideas that I have tried as I have explored what Living Well looks like for me. Some may work for you, some may not - but hopefully it will give you a few ideas to kick start your own journey!

### TAKE A LEG STRETCH

Most of us do not have the freedom to build long walks into our work day but a 10 minute leg stretch is often do-able. I have found that taking a break from the screen and allowing my brain a short rest has really helped me avoid falling down a rabbit warren of over-thinking and working too intensely - which I am prone to do! I often just walk around the block - it's not anything particularly glamorous - but just 10 minutes of fresh air and choosing to pause has been so helpful. And it's even better when I combine that with a ...

### WORSHIP WALK

I have always found that God has spoken to me through worship songs and times of worship have been times of encounter for me. I have created a 'worship' playlist on my apple music account (other music streaming services are available!!!) that I play on shuffle and listen through my headphones as I take a leg stretch! The number of times that the words of the song that has played have been just what I needed to be reminded of is incredible!

### ENGAGE YOUR SENSES

We are wonderfully made by an incredible creator God who gifted us with senses!! I find that engaging my senses in prayer is a beautiful way of meeting with God. When I have time for a longer prayer time, I often light a scented candle as a way of marking out that time as 'special'. I quite like lighting an incense stick with a prayer that the fragrance of Jesus will fill our home - I've been known to do the same before going into a tricky meeting when I worked from home - may the fragrance of Jesus be in this conversation - tiny reminders to notice the presence of Jesus with me each day.

### START YOUR DAY WITH JESUS

There are so many apps and books available to help us spend time in the presence of God each day - daily bible notes, bible reading programmes that lead you through reading the full bible, prayer apps, ancient rhythms and patterns of prayer to follow. In different seasons of life I have used different tools and resources. I am choosing to approach this with grace! Previously, I have felt guilt and shame when I have missed a day or several! I don't want to view my time with God as something I 'ought' to do out of duty. Feeling like that in the past has been a barrier to building a healthy rhythm of stillness, rather than an encouragement! Rather, I am choosing to set aside time and noticing the richness it brings when I do!

### BREATHING PRAYERS

We've been practising these in the revive part of our Rhythms of Grace sessions. For more information, check out the Breathing Prayers resource on the Living well website,

## SESSION 3

# Stillness - Top tips and Ideas



### LECTIO DIVINA

When I have the luxury of a longer time of prayer and reading my bible, Lectio Divina is the tool I often use. It's an engaging, interactive and Spirit-led way to read the bible, based on an ancient pattern of prayer, which allows you to really savour, wrestle with, be challenged and encouraged by scripture as you spend time in the presence of God. You can find loads of information about Lectio Divina online - some of which is brilliant and some I find quite complicated and formal.

In a nutshell, you simply prayerfully read a bible passage through several times, being open to what God is saying to you through it. It's a little like peeling back the layers of an onion as, each time, you ask God to reveal a deeper truth. The bible tells us that the word of God is living and active and I am often amazed at how God breathes life into the scripture I read - revealing things I have not noticed before. But using Lectio Divina has amplified this for me! Each time I have done it, I have been overwhelmed by how God has held me and spoken right to me with what I needed in that moment.

If you would like to have a go - I have created a simple tool to take you through my version of Lectio Divina.

And to help get you started - here are some passages you could look at:

-Philippians 4:1-9

-Psalm 1

-Matthew 11:25-30

-Romans 5:1-8

-Psalm 103

### PRAYING THE EXAMEN

The Examen is another ancient pattern of prayer that guides you through a time of reflecting on your day. As we pray the Examen, we are encouraged to pay attention to the emotions we have experienced that day - listening to what God is saying to us through them - as well as noticing where God has been at work in our life. I have found it a beautiful way of finishing my day that can shift my attention to Jesus, enjoy His Shalom peace and encourage an attitude of gratitude.

I've created a simple tool to lead you through a time of Examen - using your body as a guide!

*What is the first step you are going to take towards building a rhythm of Stillness in your life this week?*



# SESSION 4

## Wonder



In this session we are exploring how we can 'Walk with Wonder'- being present and bringing curiosity that enables us to notice where God is at work in our life.

“Earth's crammed with heaven and every common bush a fire with God. But only he who sees it takes off his shoes. The rest sit around it and pluck blackberries.”  
Elizabeth Barrett Browning

### REVIVE

Breathing Prayer

'Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever' - Psalm 136:1

### RELATE

- Last week we unpacked the rhythm of Stillness. Do you have any reflections as you have continued to think about this during the week?
- Is there something you have tried this week that you have found helpful?
- What does the word Wonder mean to you? Does the word create any feelings in you?
- What does Wonder look like in your life?

### REVIEW

Watch the video - 'Session 4 - Wonder'

### RESPOND 1

Spend a few moments in quiet. Use the How, Wow and a Bow resource as you spend time reflecting on the wonder of God.

You might like to have some quiet, reflective music playing as you do this

### REFLECT

- Was there anything that stood out to you, particularly, as you watched the Video on Wonder?
- Was there anything in the video that made you wonder How? or exclaim in wonder Wow!
- What are the things that might get in the way of a rhythm of Wonder for you?
- What might it look like for you to Walk with Wonder?
- Read the top tips and ideas for Wonder. Is there anything that might work for you?

### RESPOND 2

What is your take home from today?  
Is there something you are going to do differently this week?  
Is there something you are going to try out?

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# A How?, A Wow! and a Bow

“Wonder is the beginning of wisdom”  
Socrates

Walking with Wonder is an important rhythm as we consider the pace at which we approach life. It tends to be something that children do far better than adults. As adults, it is so easy for us to become complacent about the world around us and bruised by difficulties in life that our sense of wonder can be tarnished or replaced by pragmatism or cynicism. As our weight of responsibility grows and life becomes busier – we can be too distracted by what is going on around us that we forget to be present, to notice, to enjoy and to wonder ...

Being intentional about noticing the Wonder that surrounds us can help us to practise forming a rhythm of Walking with Wonder.

This simple reflection tool can be a great conversation starter at a family mealtime as you share in each others days and notice the Wonder.

Or perhaps you might like to simply sit with a cuppa on your own for a few moments and ask God to bring to your attention where He has been revealing His wonder in your day as you sit and reflect.

## HOW?

What has made you stop and think ‘I wonder how ...?!’ today?

## WOW!

What have you noticed that has made you think ‘Wow – that is awesome!!’

## BOW

When have you noticed God at work in your life today?

*‘You’ll never find a rainbow if you’re looking down’  
Charlie Chapin*



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## SESSION 4

# Wonder - Top tips and Ideas



These are just a few ideas that I have tried as I have explored what Living Well looks like for me. Some may work for you, some may not - but hopefully it will give you a few ideas to kick start your own journey!

### PAUSE

Last week, we explored what it can look like to punctuate our day with moments of Stillness. I have found that those regular moments of Stillness help me be more present in each day and so, make space to notice and then wonder.

### NOTICE AND REFLECT

As we pause, we make space to notice where God is at work in our life and can reflect on His goodness. The reflective practice tool that we used earlier in this session, 'A How, A Wow and A Bow', is a great way of giving us some structure as we begin to build this rhythm into our daily lives.

Another tool that I find really helpful with this is the ancient pattern of prayer called the Examen that we looked at last week. The Examen is a pattern of prayer, traditionally practised by many religious orders both at lunchtime and in the evening, that invites God to help us prayerfully reflect on the day that has passed, asking Him to draw our attention to where He has been at work in our life and encouraging us to consider our responses in those moments.

I have found that praying the Examen has helped me notice the faithfulness of God as I have stilled myself in the evening. It is also an incredibly soothing and peaceful way to end the day.

### GIVE THANKS

Wonder and Thankfulness go hand in hand and a great way to reflect on the goodness of God and make sure we notice His Wonder in our day is to start by considering what it is that we are thankful for.

"What's been the joy in your day?" was an encouragement and challenge among colleagues in a school I once worked in that helped us all to shift focus - and we found that, even on the most difficult days, we could always find an answer.

Keeping a gratitude diary, or simply writing down 3 things you are thankful for at the end of a day, is something that is widely advised by healthcare practitioners and mental health champions as something that is beneficial and can strengthen and support mental health. As with most good things, it was God's idea first - the bible is full of encouragement to give thanks with a grateful heart. As followers of Jesus, our thankfulness can bring a richness and depth that makes space for wonder as we spend time in the presence of the One to whom we bring our thanks.

*What is the first step you are going to take towards building a rhythm of Wonder in your life this week?*

# SESSION 5

## Submission



**In this session we are looking at our final rhythm as we explore what it looks like to orient our lives around Jesus - remembering that He holds all things together - and press into a rhythm of submission.**

### REVIVE

Breathing Prayer

'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to Him and He will make your paths straight.' Proverbs 3:5-6

“You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope.  
With less of you there is more of God and his rule.”  
Matt 5:3 MSG

### RELATE

- Last week we unpacked the rhythm of Wonder. Do you have any reflections as you have continued to think about this during the week?
- Is there something you have tried this week that you have found helpful?
- What does the word Submission mean to you? Does the word create any feelings in you?
- What does Submission look like in your life?

### REVIEW

Watch the video - 'Session 5 - Submission'

### REFLECT

- Was there anything that stood out to you, particularly, as you watched the Video on Submission?
- What might it look like to take a step back and make space for the wonder of God in your daily life?
- As we reach the end of our 5 week journey into exploring the rhythms of Living Well, what has stood out to you the most?
- What have you tried over the past few weeks that you want to keep doing moving forward?
- What might be some of the challenges to Living Well for you?
- What might help you to keep pressing into Living Well?

### RESPOND 1

Spend a few moments being still, asking God to draw your attention to the areas of your life that you are holding tightly to - the situations that you are trying to tackle in your own strength. Hold your fist closed as you pray and ask God to reveal to you what it is that you might be grasping - what are you holding tightly to...

... then open your hand and invite Jesus into those areas of your life, submitting to His grace and making space for His Wonder.

You might like to finish this time by saying Richard Foster's Prayer of Relinquishment out loud together.

### RESPOND 2

What is your take home from today?  
Is there something you are going to do differently this week?  
Is there something you are going to try out?

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# A Prayer of Relinquishment

Today, O Lord, I yield myself to you.

May your will be my delight today.

May your way have perfect sway in me.

May your love be the pattern of my living.

I surrender to you

my hopes,

my dreams,

my ambitions.

Do with them what you will, when you will, as you will.

I place into your loving care

my family,

my friends,

my future.

Care for them with a care that I can never give.

I release into your hands

my need to control,

my craving for status,

my fear of obscurity.

Eradicate the evil, purify the good, and establish your kingdom on earth.

For Jesus sake,

Amen

From the book, 'Prayers of the heart' by Richard Foster



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