



I often find myself tapping my foot to the music in a shop, strumming my fingers on my jeans or humming along to the song playing. I am sure you do it too. As you listen you get into the flow of the beat and find yourself moving in rhythm with the music. I am a musician myself and I can remember times when I have been playing the piano and someone is playing the guitar with a different rhythm. I was playing in $\frac{3}{4}$ time and they were playing in something quite different – it doesn't work and you have to stop playing and communicate a clear beat. New Year's eve found us as a family in a Spanish town, close to where we live and the whole population was on the streets to celebrate with twelve grapes in hand at midnight! (the custom in Spain to eat a grape on the sound of each chime at midnight) The town square was packed out and the bands playing were definitely in rhythm together and everyone was moving in time with the music and soaking up the fun atmosphere. Everyone was bouncing in rhythm.

Rhythm isn't so easy in YWAM is it? Our lifestyle is such that every week is often different. For me it's speaking in Ireland last week, hosting a retreat in Spain this week and leading a consultation in Hungary next week! It is hard to be consistent every day, every week, every month with a routine. However, if we are going to live healthy, fruitful lives, this is an issue we have to work out. Without rhythm we won't last long.

I was chatting to my twenty something kids the other week and we got talking about routines. All three kids have an aspect of high I on the DISC along with my wife, although two of them are strong D's too. So they are very different from me. Yet through our conversation we agreed that routine was important for each of us. It fascinated me that someone who like constant change like my wife, who is motivated by the new thing and likes to think options and futures, but knows her need and even likes a routine.

We all need that sense of stepping in the groove, not just enjoying the music but living our lives along with the beat. When there's no groove, its like the music stops, we get stuck, there's no movement and we stop really living. That's why we have to be so careful of holiday times, weekends, weeks away travelling and days off, because if we're not careful we will lose our rhythm or never get into one.

Rhythm of the day: You probably have a set routine in the morning that gets you going. Perhaps not in the same order as me but it goes something like this. Switch off the alarm, climb out of bed, and manoeuvre your way to the kitchen to make two cups of coffee (one for the wife) and bring it back to bed where we read out devotions and pray. Then throw the dog a ball, that she's placed just nicely out of reach by the side of the bed, then off to the bathroom to try and clean up. Brush teeth, shave (generally while sitting on the loo – no sense in wasting time!). A quick shower, dress and upstairs (yes its upstairs for us) to

start the day. Breakfast doesn't usually come until later in the morning in Spain having eaten late the night before. Most of that can take place without too much thinking. Why? Rhythm! We need that kind of rhythm in so many categories in our lives.

The Rhythm of Jesus: Jesus had certain rhythms in his life during his ministry years that we can observe. Early in the morning he would disappear from the house and wander in the mountains connecting with his father. He also made sure he found priority time to spend with Peter, James and John, as well as in his home from home in Bethany with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Part of his rhythm while in Jerusalem was time in the garden of gethsemane with his disciples. That's why Judas knew where to find him on the night he betrayed him. Perhaps that's why it didn't seem special to the rest of the disciples on the particular night that Jesus asked them to "watch and pray".

Rhythm of prayer: Have you ever wondered why God doesn't speak to you more? I was reading Acts 10 where Peter goes up on the roof of his house to pray. And what do you know... God speaks a very important message to him regarding the Gentiles. Did he have a significant word like that everyday? No, probably not. But because he had a rhythm he heard it when he needed to. God could download a message to Peter because he had his attention on a regular basis. God obviously takes every opportunity he can to speak to us, if we only listen once in a while. But his desire is to communicate on a regular basis and for that we need routine.

Daniel was a man devoted to God who had a pattern of praying three times a day. Even in the midst of persecution where it was prohibited to pray to anyone other than the King, Daniel continued his prayers to the God of heaven. He was seen praying and caught red-handed and had to suffer the consequences. But of course we know the miraculous salvation from the Lions den. This was a man who had a rhythm of prayer.

Rhythm of witnessing: Have you ever wondered why you haven't led more people to Jesus? I have just read through the book of Acts and been fascinated by the salvation of Paul and his development into a major leader in the early church. Everywhere he went he couldn't help himself but talk about Jesus. Just as he was passionate about persecuting the Christians before his Damascus road experience, after his conversion he was passionate about sharing his faith. Every opportunity that came his way he would speak – there was no fear of man, no holding back, no compromise. He said, "woe unto me if I do not preach the gospel." He had a daily rhythm of speaking about Jesus.

Rhythm of reading: I started this year with the Murray M'Cheyne bible reading plan. It takes you through the Old Testament once and the New Testament twice in the year, with four passages everyday to read. I have the blessing of a bible application on my phone that with one touch takes me to the next passage – very handy! There was a connection with my phone and thinking bible, so whenever there was a spare few minutes, it was spent reading. After a month, the habit was established and it is so easy to fulfil as an extra to my normal devotions.

Rhythms of life: Life needs some sense of order but not too much. It's getting the balance of on the one hand "predictability killing" life and on the other "chaos reigning." If each new day has no shape to it at all, we lose a sense of priority and order.

I'm sure you have a routine of looking at emails! As I open my computer, I've made a goal of half an hour of Spanish before I get into my emails (otherwise I never get back to it). You probably have a rhythm for coffee breaks, and snacks (no better cut out the snacks!) and meals. We each have a circle of friends, family and acquaintances. How do we relate with them all and keep up? Certain people we see each week, each month, each year and others every blue moon.

We need a rhythm for so many areas of our lives. Why not make your own list right now....

Here are some of the aspects of my rhythm apart from my actual job role:

- Prayer – often with my wife while walking the dog or driving, prayer list of people to cover each day of the month.
- Reading – reading plan for the bible, meditation and study, other books
- Writing – journal regularly, leadership letters, preparations while travelling
- Marriage – fondue each week, plan week together, devotions, days away,
- Family – phone calls & skyping, yearly get togethers, processing decisions.
- Friends – for coffee and meals, visiting, working with us on retreats and courses.
- Hospitality – specific invitations each week, spontaneous visitors.
- Communication – news-letters, circles of involvement in YWAM ministries
- Exercise – walking, running,
- Meal times – communion, brainstorm thoughts in conversation,
- Coaching – every 2 weeks with clients
- Team meetings – worship, prayer, hearing from God, blessing one another

As you look at your list, you probably have areas where the rhythm is flowing smoothly and other areas where it isn't. Whenever we enter a transition, our rhythm can be upset and we need to sit down and come up with a plan to reset the rhythm. Is there one category of life you feel needs growth? What's set up in your schedule right now to develop that area? When you think about it with no rhythm it will probably dwindle or plateau.

Often we set goals in our lives to create a rhythm. Once we are functioning well, then the goal has produced its result – a good rhythm. Then the goal is not necessary any more as the new habit has become part of our lives. In my experience, I need to check out how I am doing every 3 months along with the change of the season. I call it my PDP or personal development plan. If we are going to keep in step, and keep moving with the music, then its good to take a little time to work on our rhythm by setting some new goals.

I cast off the works that spring from a restless spirit.

I rest in you, my Maker and Redeemer.

Help me to order my life according to your rhythms.

A Celtic prayer.