The Fruit of the Spirit in My Life

MATTHEW 7:15-20

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

GALATIANS 5:22-26

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

1 Read together

Have one person read Matthew 7:15-20 aloud, and another read Galatians 5:22-26.

Take a moment of silence.
Discuss what you notice.

Does putting the passages side by side reveal anything? Where are you curious?

2 Reflect

Take time to reflect on the fruit of the Spirit that Paul names. Which ones do *you think* is most ripe in your life? Which do you think needs most tending?

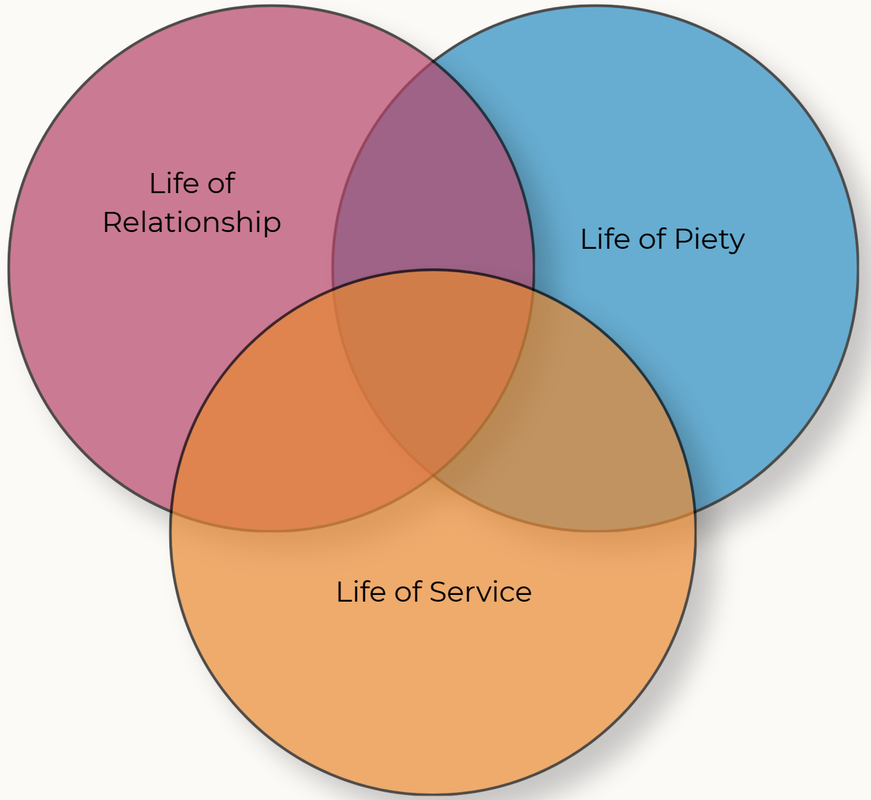
Consider the people who know you best, the people in your church, and the people you encounter in your town. . Do you think they would agree?

3 Share

Take time for each person to share one thriving fruit and one fruit that needs tending. Listen for connection and overlap. Appoint someone to pray over what was shared.

Communities for Spiritual Vitality

Fruit in a Congregation



- Inner Piety - Life of piety
- Interpersonal vulnerability and connection - life of relationship
- Outward Service - Life of Service

Life of Piety – Who Are we?

“Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness”

Psalms

“…be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to one another, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ…” -

Ephesians 5:18b-20a

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, [n]singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” -

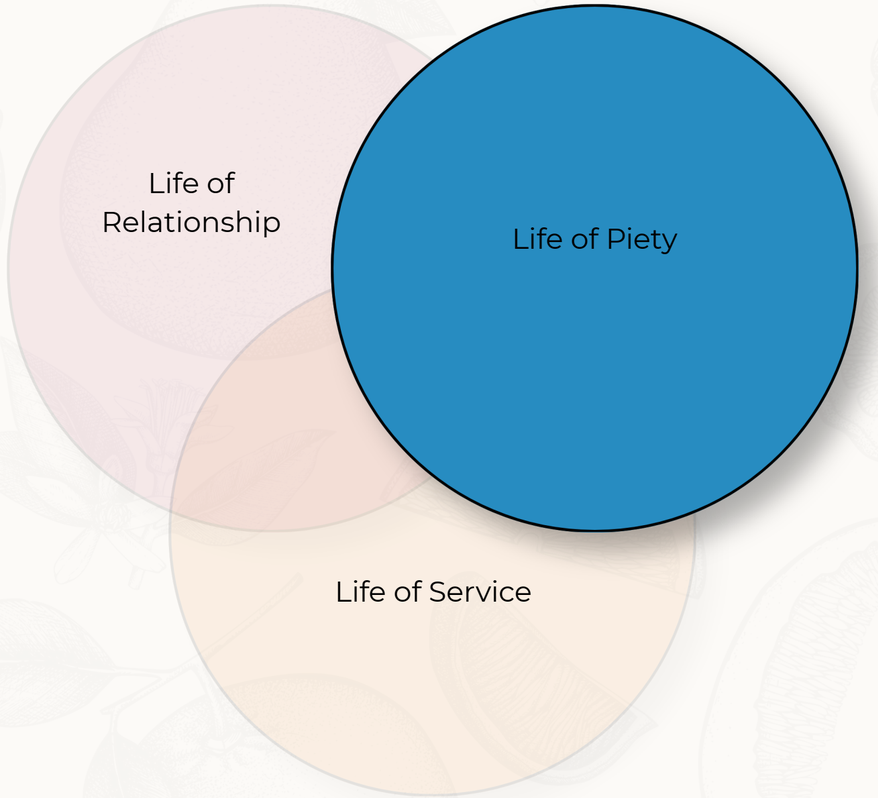
Colossians 3:16

Life of Piety

- The Church exists to worship God
- Worship is to *nourish us*
- Worship is to *change us*
- Worship is to *orient us*

The Life of Piety - Is This Our Fruit?

- Do we value Sunday gathering, regardless of its form?
- Are we focused more on the liturgy or on each other during our worship?
- How much do we integrate prayer, practice, and worship in our meetings and governance?
- Have we found ways to include many people in our worship or is it held by only a few (this includes altar guide, bulletins, announcements, as much as LEM, readers, etc.)?
- Do we have bible study, daily office, prayer groups or other ways to connect to God together beyond Sunday?



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Life of Relationship – How are We?

“[Just] as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.”

1 Corinthians 12;12

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 13:35

“confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.”

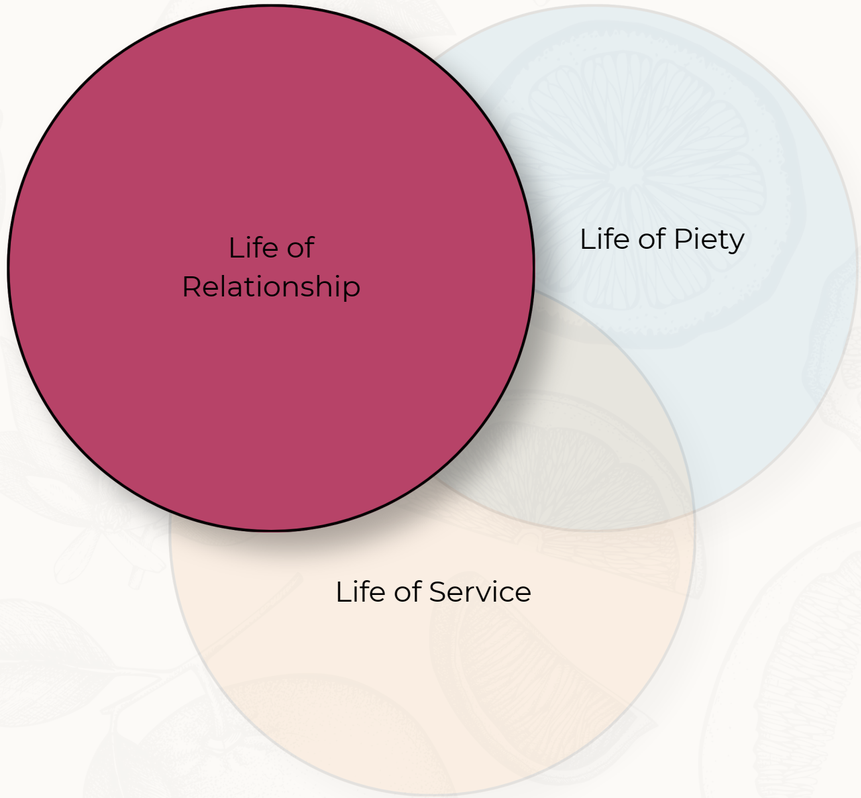
James 5:16

Life of Relationship

- Christian faith is not lived in isolation between ourselves and God, it always involves others
- In community we
  - Receive a mirror of ourselves
  - Protected from error and delusion
  - Practice acts of mercy, kindness, gentleness, self-control, etc.
  - Grow in mutual vulnerability
  - Witness to the body of Christ and mutual forbearance
  - Live out the hope of a restored creation and God’s reign
- KONONIA

Life of Community - Is This Our Fruit?

- How comfortable did you feel sharing your personal ripe and unripe fruit with your delegation?
- How do you deal with difference as a community?
- How do you deal with disagreement as a community?
- Do you ever discuss your hopes and fears for your church as a community together?
- When you are suffering or in crisis – could you name some people at the parish whom you'd be willing to let in? What about vis versa?
- Do you have systems in place to care for each other?



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Life of Service – Why Are We?

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:14-16

“You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice; you shall not take a widow’s garment in pledge. Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this.”

Deuteronomy 24:17-18

“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.”

Matthew 25:40

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?”

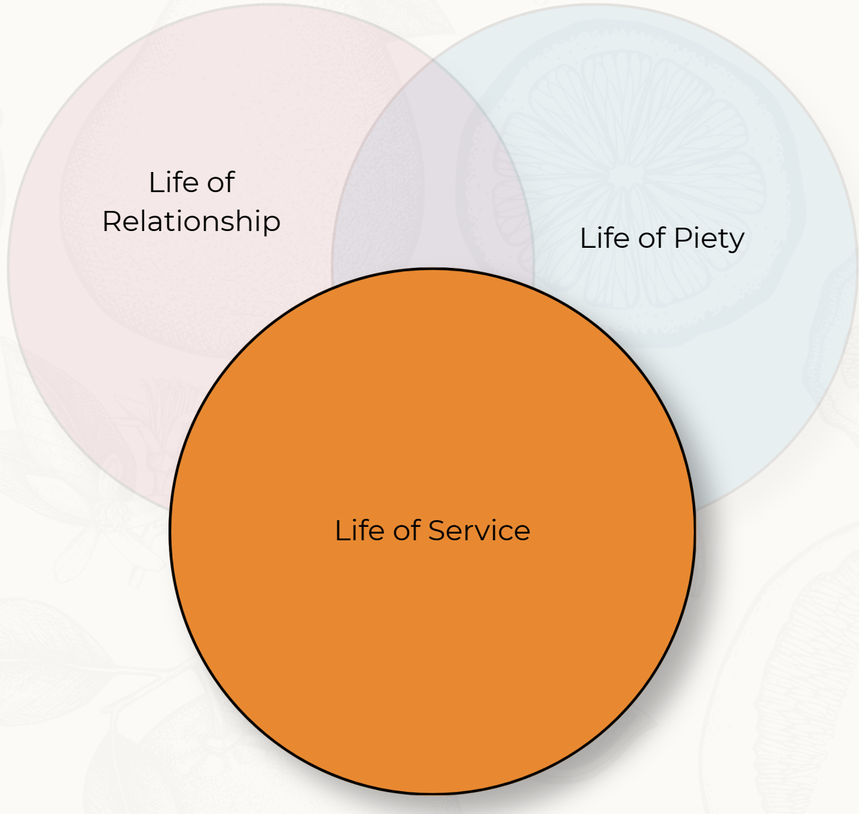
Micah 6:8

Life of Service

- The fruit of Christian Community should shine outward
- We care for others and for creation because
  - they belong to God and reflect God
  - It bears witness to God’s goodness
  - It is our way to participate in Christ’s loving self-gift in this life
  - We want to participate now in the just reign of God’s coming kingdom
  - It is the proper outpouring of gratitude for the freedom and mercy we receive from Christ
  - It flows from the belonging we cherish and want to share with others from being in vulnerable and mature Christian community

Life of Service - Is This Our Fruit?

- How much of our budget goes to ourselves (our building, our parishioners, and our needs) vs. ourselves?
- How many community partners regularly engage with our building? How do we welcome them?
- How often do we go beyond the building together to:
  - Get to know others
  - Serve others
  - Partner with others
- If we were to close today, what would the neighbors miss most?



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- Which of the three fruit described above: Piety, Relationship, Service do you feel is ripest in your community? Why and how can you tell?

- Which of the three fruit do you think is least ripe in your community?

- Do you think most people in your community would agree with you?

- Is it a conversation you think you could have together?

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"You shall know them by their fruit"

The ripe fruit we offer to God is

_____

The fruit we ask God's grace to ripen actively this year is

_____

"You shall know them by their fruit"

In faith, hope, and love,

_____

Congregation Name



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Stand up and find a seat somewhere new,
near people outside your region and delegation

Consider: What do you learn from someone
whose corner of the diocese looks different from yours?

What do you have to offer from your community's
experience?

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