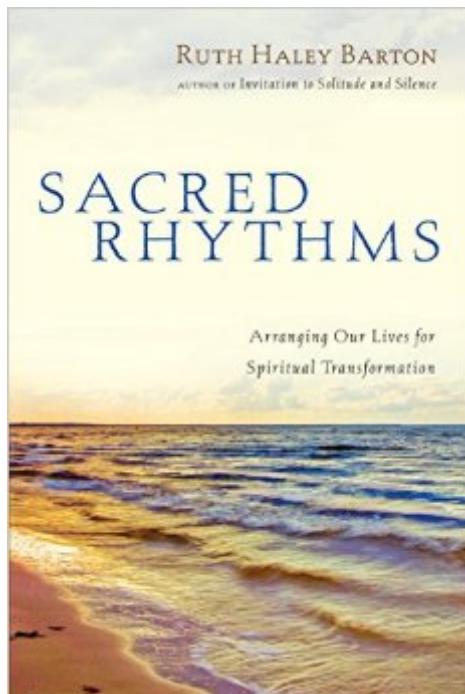


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Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives For Spiritual Transformation



Synopsis

Winner of a 2006 Logos Book Award! Do you long for a deep, fundamental change in your life with God? Do you desire a greater intimacy with God? Do you wonder how you might truly live your life as God created you to live it? Spiritual disciplines are activities that open us to God's transforming love and the changes that only God can bring about in our lives. Picking up on the monastic tradition of creating a "rule of life" that allows for regular space for the practice of the spiritual disciplines, this book takes you more deeply into understanding seven key disciplines along with practical ideas for weaving them into everyday life. Each chapter includes exercises to help you begin the practices--individually and in a group context. The final chapter puts it all together in a way that will help you arrange your life for spiritual transformation. The choice to establish your own sacred rhythm is the most important choice you can make with your life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

To be honest, I've gotten a little weary of books about spiritual disciplines. I always end up feeling guilty that I'm not more disciplined and perpetually struggle with having a consistent quiet time, after many years of being a Christian. Ruth Haley Barton cuts through all of that putting "discipline" (or "rule" or "rhythm" whatever you want to call it!) into the context of "desire," that we deeply long for God's transformation in our lives. She stresses that we cannot transform ourselves, only God can do that. But, we can arrange our lives in such a way that makes the conditions for transformation optimal. This book is extremely practical, gracious, and FREES you to seek God, rather than bind you to a set of rules. I highly, highly recommend it.

I borrowed a copy of *Sacred Rhythms* from the Pauline Bookstore sale shelf where I work (and live). I loved Barton's voice; her gentle style. The book itself is a kind of handbook on Christian spirituality: prayer, discernment, creating a spiritual "rule of life" (and even the *examen* of consciousness!). All very solid, very real-life oriented and very readable. But what was particularly interesting to me (a Catholic sister/nun) is how Barton, who was brought up in the Baptist tradition, makes this traditionally Catholic spirituality so approachable for non-Catholics, to whom the language may be much less familiar. Her writing is not so focused on a Protestant audience that a Catholic would be distracted or unable to relate. It's just a good, solid and balanced treatment of key issues in our life with God. Barton deserves kudos for her treatment of the Sabbath in our Christian life, and her helpful explanation of how to create a "rule of life" that sets our life on course in a way that coincides with our life with God, not setting "prayer life" and "real life" on parallel tracks.

I have to confess that I'm just getting over a horrible "Been There, Read That" attitude when it comes to books about spiritual growth. That's why it came as a delightful surprise when (a) I couldn't put this book down, (b) I read several chapters again and again and used them to spur journal/prayer entries, and (c) I'm going to take it with me on my next overnight silent retreat. I especially enjoyed the reflections on discernment and self-examination. Thank you, IVP and Ruth Haley Barton, for this gem of a book. (Note: I got the book at our public library, but have since purchased it as a gift for my sister and just ordered Barton's other book from IVP on solitude).

Ruth Haley Barton presents a clear and compelling description of the spiritual disciplines of solitude, *lectio divina*, centering/breath prayer, Ignatian *examen* (of consciousness and conscience), discernment, sabbath-keeping, and the Benedictine "rule of life." She opens the book with an invitation to explore the deep longings of your soul and name your desires before Christ. And she offers a wonderful chapter on the spirituality of learning to live in and care for our physical bodies. It was a powerful and life-changing book for me -- particularly the chapters on solitude, honoring the body, and sabbath-keeping. Barton has a gentle heart and a gracious approach to the disciplines that is so inviting. This book was my part of my devotions for the last few weeks and I find that I will miss Barton's voice and vision and the possibilities that they have stirred in my soul. I recommend this book highly to anyone who is struggling with exhaustion or burn-out and wanting permission to dream of rest.

Not a bad book. I enjoyed some chapters more than others - I think my favorite was the Sabbath chapter. I do think we're in a culture of go-go-go, and it was good to be reminded that it's important to take time for ourselves. To take a nap, take a walk, do what you want to do on your Sabbath. No errands, no busyness - just time for yourself and your family. My main problem with her was that she applied a lot of her experience to everything, as though each person's life will be similar to hers. Sometimes it overrode the message of the chapter, and made me want to skim ahead. Still a decent book, though. Highly recommend the chapter on the Sabbath, as well as the one on honoring the body.

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