What pattern, rules and rhythms do you want to instill in your family for the upcoming year?

Rhythms for Families:

**Sabbath**

* Choose one day on the weekend to reserve as your Sabbath. Honour this day and as parents choose to set it apart from the other days in your week. The day you choose, whether it be Saturday or Sunday, should be a day where no work, and nothing that resembles work is to be done. It shouldn’t be a day to check e-mails, it won’t be the day you do laundry and it won’t be the day of your weekly trip to the grocery store. It should be a day that involves only things you and your children wish to do. Allow your kids to get involved, ask them what they want to do and have them help plan the day. Your Sabbath should be centered on one another and God and the purpose of your day is for joy and rest.
* Sample Rule:
  + Take a 24hr Sabbath once a week
  + Saturday will be a reserved day for Sabbath every week. No groceries, laundry or work will be done on this day.
  + We will co-plan an event with our children once a week that allows us to bond as a family

**Prayer**

* Consider how often you pray as a family. Do you pray before every meal? When the kids are being tucked into bed? When would you like to incorporate prayer into your day? Perhaps you would love to be a family who prays together before you send your kids off to school each morning. Or maybe when your child is scared or anxious you can pray with them and ask God to give them strength and wisdom. What opportunities do you want to take hold of or create in your day that allows your family to be rooted in prayer?
* Sample Rule:
  + Pray before every meal
  + Pray before bed every night
  + Pray when your child is scared or anxious
  + Pray when you hear sirens – pray for the people who are in need of help and the emergency response workers who will be responding to them
  + Wake up early and begin each day with prayer
  + Listen to worship music or podcasts in the car – there is some really amazing worship music out there for kids and teens that you can play while you drive to school or extracurricular activities each night

**Sacred Reading**

* Other than on Sunday mornings at church how often do you and your children open the bible each week? Perhaps you and your family want to spend time reading the bible together or reading through family devotionals. Maybe your family will track along with a video based devotional but what time are you setting aside to dig into scripture together?
* Sample Rules:
  + Use the time at the end of a family dinner together for devotional time
  + Begin getting the kids ready for bed earlier so that there can be time before they sleep for bible stories and questions
  + Choose one or two evenings in a week where your family watches a video-based bible story or devotional and then talk about what you learned as a family.

**Relate: Friendship, Sexuality, Family**

* As parents do you prioritize time together as a family? Do you make family dinners happen at least once a week? Are you willing to prioritize your child’s friendships and invest in relationships with the parents of your children’s friends? As humans we are naturally wired for relationships and those relationships can be and should be part of what governs our day to day lives. We want to be investing in people, serving one another and expanding God’s Kingdom and the rules we create surrounding those relationships help make this happen.
* Sample Rule:
  + Open up your home every Sunday after church so that your child’s friends and their parents can come over to hangout and share an afternoon together. Make your home an open and inviting place where authentic friendships can form and develop
  + Set aside one night a month to go on a date with your spouse or significant other
  + Connect with a mentor / spiritual friend once a month
  + Set limits on when technology can be used (i.e. no checking emails after 6pm, no video games or no TV) – instead create meaningful memories together as a family. Go to the park, ride bikes or paint – find things to do together that allow you to build and invest in relationships.

**Restore: Body, Play, Money**

* We want to create rules that allow us to live a full and meaningful life including how we care for our bodies and what we choose to do in our spare time. Our bodies are referred to in scripture as temples, temples that we are called to care for and protect. Do you make time to take care of your body? Are you mindful of what you put into your body, how you train it, how you treat it or even how you speak about it? Rules that honour and restore our bodies allow us to engage more fully in the mission of serving others and in gaining a renewed sense of awe and wonder for God’s creation.
* Sample Rule
  + Go to the Gym 3 times a week
  + Get outdoors (hike, bike, swim, roller blade) two to three times a week
  + Be conscious about the food you are consuming
    - Cut out sugar or processed foods
    - Eat more fruits or vegetables
  + Create set times for when you go to sleep and when you wake up
  + Take a yearly vacation with family
  + Make time for the things you love
    - Go to the movies
    - Get outside
    - Go to see a play
    - Travel
    - Explore your city
    - Go to the park
    - Ride bikes
  + Tithe to your local church

**Reach Out: Work, Justice, Witness**

* As Christ followers we are called to go and share the Good News of Jesus with the world around us. Our words, actions and the way we live our lives allow us to be a shining light to those in our midst and help us proclaim God’s goodness and love. Where we choose to work, how we conduct ourselves in our professional lives and how we choose to invest in compassion opportunities all allow us to point to Jesus. Compassion is something we can foster in our kids at a young age by being intentional about the conversations we have and the activities we choose to do together as a family.
* Sample Rule
  + Volunteer at camp for a week in the summer
  + Donate to a not for profit organization
  + Make arrangements at your local food bank for your family (or even a few families from your church or neighbourhood) to sort and organize food
  + Donate gently used clothes or toys in your home (have your children help choose what they would like to donate)
  + If your family provides your kids with an allowance for chores or helping around the house ask them where they would like to donate part of their allowance to. Let them have ownership in where they want their money to go and see what they are passionate about.
  + Create moments on a weekly or daily basis for random acts of kindness
    - Bake something sweet for a new family who moves in on your street
    - Shovel the snow off of the driveway for your next door neighbour
    - Bring your crossing guard a hot chocolate on the way to school one day