



## Reality Member Check-Ins

What is this practice and why do we do it?

Our membership check-ins are a space of growth and resonance where we can be ministered to by the Holy Spirit and each other.

Let's parse that out one piece at a time.

### A space...

Get more exercise? Spend more time with God? Get off my phone and be present with my kids? The list of things we want in our lives but don't do are long and varied. By creating a formal document and making it part of our church rhythms, we are trying to create space to do the things that we most value.

### ...of growth...

Following Christ's commands to bear fruit (John 15:16) and God's invitation to grow into the person of Jesus (Philippians 2:1-11), we don't want to settle for signing membership papers or baptism as the sole evidence of our allegiance to Jesus. Rather, we want to cultivate lives and practices that are growing in love for Jesus, one another and our city in every season.

### ...of resonance...

Resonance is what we experience when we encounter and connect with something greater than ourselves. Andy Root describes resonance like this:



*Such experiences are full. You feel a resonance between yourself and the world, a felt relationship that reverberates at the frequency of the good. You confess that such experiences really spoke to you, touched you. You weren't sure what you'd find when you started reading that poem, watching that movie, or making faces with that child, but soon you found yourself caught up in something, freely bound to someone, or opened to some way of seeing that made you certain you were inside a gift called life. You encountered a deep sense that life was calling out to you, seeking to include you. This is an event of resonance. In these moments of resonance you experience your own life teeming with meaning. This meaning seems to be coming to you. It's an experience that seems to be full of time. Meaning is not just produced from within you amid the hurried pace to make something of yourself. The world is animated. You sense that you're connected to something bigger than a container of resources.*

Root, Andrew. *The Congregation in a Secular Age (Ministry in a Secular Age Book #3)* (pp. 195-196). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

Sociologist Harmut Rosa says resonance has four qualities:

- Affection - we are truly moved and known
- Emotion - we are emotionally engaged and connected (more on this in the next section)
- Transformative - we are changed
- An element of unpredictability - while familiar, it is outside of our control

I don't know about you, but I long for resonance. And our hope is that this check-in can create such a space.

...to be ministered to...

When we consider what we're looking for in a church and spiritual community, we may come up with a long list. One of the most common, regardless of our gender,



theological persuasions and location, is the desire to have a place where we encounter the ministry of Christ, where we can be ministered to and where we can minister to others.

...by the Holy Spirit and each other.

Resonance is the opposite of alienation. It draws us closer to Jesus and to each other. We take a step of vulnerability to be seen, known and acknowledged by God and those in our community in order to experience love. Thus, our check-in has three parts: we take time to assess our own lives in the last season, we invite others to assess with us and we come together in a time of ministry and resonance to discuss.

One last note: when we stop to assess our lives there can be a fear that we will feel like we are “failing”, a tacit assumption that we could be giving more, which makes us end up with an overwhelming sense of guilt - which makes this whole experience very non-attractive. We want to be clear, the goal of this check-in is not to make you feel guilty - but space for resonance through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and others in our community. Part of this includes a sober review of how we’ve been spending our time, focus and energy in the last season of life. Out of love, God is always calling us away from alienation and stagnancy into deeper friendship and discipleship, but He also wants to bless us and remind us of who we are in Christ.

This guide has three parts:

- A. Guide for the member
- B. Guide for friend(s)
- C. Guide for time together



## GUIDE FOR MEMBER

### Preparation:

1. Set aside a time for this review. We would suggest 1 hour.
2. Review our communal Rule of Life.
3. If you have one, review your personal Rule of Life from the past season
4. Invite others to join you in this check-in.
  - a. We suggest inviting 3 people to join you in this process. It could be a mix of those you know and trust within the Reality Family, leadership from Reality, and those you'd like to invite to speak into your life or become closer with.
    - i. Note - if you are married, we encourage you to process these questions and this process with your spouse, but to invite others into the process.
  - b. These folks will commit to the prep-work (45 mins), give you feedback in the check-in time (approx 1 hour) and will help to keep you accountable to any decisions you make.

### Spend some time answering the following questions:

1. In this last season, has my life's direction been towards or away from God? Why might that be?

If you need, here are a few detailed questions to help you discern:

1. Is the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5) growing in my life?
2. Have I created space to meet with God regularly in the last season?
3. Where have I been aware of God's presence and ministry in my life?  
Where am I unaware of it?



2. In this last season, has my life's direction been towards or away from loving God's family? Why might that be?

If you need, here are a few detailed questions to help you discern:

1. Have I been using my time, treasure and gifts to minister to those in my church family?
2. Do you see your immediate family as a place for expressing God's love (spouse, kids, parents, siblings)?
3. Am I harbouring bitterness or anger towards my brothers and sisters?
4. Am I cultivating spiritual friendships?
5. Am I being accountable to the leadership of the church and holding them accountable to their leadership to the church?

3. In this last season of life, has my life's direction been towards or away from loving my neighbour and the city? Why might that be?

If you need, here are a few detailed questions to help you discern:

1. Have you taken the next steps in meaning connection with a non-Christian neighbour this month?
2. Regardless of how you feel about Vancouver at this very moment, is Jesus' heart for the city evident in your own?
3. How are the voices in your life (podcasts, books, friends, your own) influencing your heart for the city?

4. Given the above, what worked and what didn't in your previous Rule of Life?

Our Rule of Life is not an expectation, but an opportunity to learn, grow, develop and flex in different seasons of life and discipleship.



5. Spend some time praying and considering the following question - What might God be calling me into in this next season?

Remember that disciplines work in tandem - engagement and resistance. One of the most important things to remember in this section is to pair everything you would like to start with something you will stop. For example, I will stop looking at my phone before 8:30am in order to spend time with God and my family before work.

6. Summarize your answer from questions 1-5 for those you've invited to join you.



## GUIDE FOR FRIEND(S) / ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER(S)

Thanks for your willingness to be a friend and brother or sister to a member of our family at Reality. While we don't want this to be too taxing, we also want to remind you that you are about to engage in important ministry as you walk through these questions. As such, we encourage you to take time to pray, to listen to God and to reflect through the questions below. We suggest giving yourself 1 uninterrupted hour.

Finally, a reminder that the person who has invited you to fill this out has invited you to leadership in their life, becoming vulnerable and showing humility. We encourage you to join them in this place of humility and service, following in the path of Jesus, rather than a place of pride and domination (Mark 10:42-45). To communicate this heart well to them, we encourage processing these questions in two steps:

1. Read through the questions, taking notes, which you will not share with the other person. This gives you space to process and use your own words.
2. After you've answered question 4, review your answers and re-write them asking, "What is the overall tone I need to have in this conversation? How can I best represent God's heart for this person through my words?" This is a very practical way you can show God's love to your friend.

A final note: The member may or may not ask for your answers to questions 1-3 in the group processing time. Regardless, we think it's important for you to prayerfully consider them.



Questions to consider:

1. In this last season, have you observed this person's life moving towards or away from God? Do you observe anything that might be causing this?
2. In this season, has this person's life been toward or away from God's family? Why do you think this might be?
3. In this season, has this person's life been toward or away from the city and their neighbours? Why do you think this might be?
4. Spend some time praying for this individual specifically asking these questions:
  - a. What can I be thankful for about this person? How do they reflect the character of God into my life and the lives of others?
  - b. What can I intercede for this person? Are there any needs or concerns or areas of darkness?
  - c. How can I bless this person? Are there passages, encouragement, or images I can pray over them in blessing?
  - d. How can I commission this person? How and where are they sent out into the world?





## GUIDE FOR TIME TOGETHER

1. Member shares - In this last season, has my life's direction been towards or away from God? Why might that be?
  - a. Member can request feedback from friends on this area of their life.
  
2. Member shares - In this last season, has my life's direction been towards or away from loving God's family? Why might that be?
  - a. Member can request feedback from friends on this area of their life.
  
3. Member shares - In this last season of life, has my life's direction been towards or away from loving my neighbour and the city? Why might that be?
  - a. Member can request feedback from friends on this area of their life.
  
4. Friends share
  - a. What am I thankful for about this person? How do they reflect the character of God into my life and the lives of others?
  - b. What can I intercede for this person? Are there any needs or concerns or areas of darkness?
  - c. How can I bless this person? Are there passages or encouragements or pictures I can pray over them in blessing?
  - d. How can I commission this person? How and where are they sent out into the world?
  
5. Member shares - what worked and what didn't in your previous Rule of Life?



6. Member shares - What might God be calling me into in this next season?

7. Spend some time praying for the member

### Post Check-In

Take some time to create an updated and refreshed Rule of Life for the next season.

Remember to:

- a. Be specific
- b. Combine practices of abstinence with practices of engagement
- c. Be realistic
- d. Format it in a personally engaging way

Share with your friends as a method of accountability and prayer in this next season.