

Name _____

Benedictine Rules

Read, reflect, and share your comments on these rules taken from the Rule of St. Benedict.

On Obedience (Chapter 5)

The first degree of humility is obedience without delay.
This is the virtue of those
who hold nothing dearer to them than Christ;
who, because of the holy service they have professed,
and the fear of hell,
and the glory of life everlasting,
as soon as anything has been ordered by the Superior,
receive it as a divine command
and cannot suffer any delay in executing it.
Of these the Lord says,
“As soon as he heard, he obeyed Me” (Ps. 17:45).
And again to teachers He says,
“He who hears you, hears Me” (Luke 10:16).

Such as these, therefore,
immediately leaving their own affairs
and forsaking their own will,
dropping the work they were engaged in
and leaving it unfinished,
with the ready step of obedience
follow up with their deeds the voice of him who commands.
And so as it were at the same moment
the master’s command is given
and the disciple’s work is completed,
the two things being speedily accomplished together
in the swiftness of the fear of God
by those who are moved
with the desire of attaining life everlasting.
That desire is their motive for choosing the narrow way,
of which the Lord says,
“Narrow is the way that leads to life” (Matt. 7:14),
so that,
not living according to their own choice
nor obeying their own desires and pleasures
but walking by another’s judgment and command,
they dwell in monasteries and desire to have an Abbot over them.
Assuredly such as these are living up to that maxim of the Lord
in which He says,
“I have come not to do My own will,
but the will of Him who sent Me” (John 6:38).

On the Daily Manual Labor

Idleness is the enemy of the soul.
Therefore the sisters should be occupied
at certain times in manual labor,
and again at fixed hours in sacred reading.
To that end
we think that the times for each may be prescribed as follows.

From Easter until the Calends of October,
when they come out from Prime in the morning
let them labor at whatever is necessary
until about the fourth hour,
and from the fourth hour until about the sixth
let them apply themselves to reading.
After the sixth hour,
having left the table,
let them rest on their beds in perfect silence;
or if anyone may perhaps want to read,
let her read to herself
in such a way as not to disturb anyone else.
Let None be said rather early,
at the middle of the eighth hour,
and let them again do what work has to be done until Vespers.

And if the circumstances of the place or their poverty
should require that they themselves
do the work of gathering the harvest,
let them not be discontented;
for then are they truly monastics
when they live by the labor of their hands,
as did our Fathers and the Apostles.
Let all things be done with moderation, however,
for the sake of the faint-hearted.

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Glimpses of Community Life

Here are ten situations that might occur in the life of a religious. For each one discuss 1) how it compares with family life; 2) how it might promote holiness; 3) how you would personally respond to it.

1. It is your turn to cook. You come home from your ministry exhausted and frustrated. Another community member sees this and offers to get the dinner ready.
2. Your father dies. Many members of your community come to the wake and funeral. Those you live with stay with you the whole time. You are deluged with cards from the other members.
3. You are a principal of a school your community owns, but you dream of working in the missions. The superior of your community asks you to stay on three more years as principal because you're needed there.
4. You live in a house of five religious. One of them is a grouch who is always complaining.
5. Each evening at 5:30 p.m. your community gathers in the chapel for prayer together. Some nights this is difficult because you have a thirty-minute drive home from work.
6. While you are in another state you meet one of its bishops. He tells you he has the highest admiration for the members of your community who work with him.
7. You have a chance to travel to Hawaii. Your community leaders decide you may not go.
8. You live with three other religious in a house that has only one television set. Sometimes two of you want to watch different programs that are on at the same time.
9. You are applying for a new ministry. On the day of your interview the community members you live with pray for you. When you get the job, they celebrate by taking you out to dinner.
10. You need to get to the airport, but everyone in your local community is busy that day. You call a neighboring community, and one of its members takes you.

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A Community Profile

Complete the following profile for the religious community of your choice.

Title of community:

Primary ministry:

Other ministries:

Charism:

Founder:

History:

Number of members:

Region of ministry:

Site of headquarters:

Vows:

Customary prayers:

Stages of formation:

Kind of associate members:

Habit:

Other information:

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Survival Skills for Singles

Answer the following with a check mark in the yes or no column. (The more checks you have in the "yes" column, the better your chances for surviving as an adult single!)

	Yes	No
Can you care for a car?	_____	_____
Do you know how to cook?	_____	_____
Do you know how to care for a cold?	_____	_____
Are you comfortable asking people for help?	_____	_____
Do you have more than one good friend?	_____	_____
Can you get around by yourself in an unfamiliar region?	_____	_____
Do you enjoy being alone?	_____	_____
Can you occupy yourself in long stretches of free time?	_____	_____
Can you refuse the internal and external pressures to have sex?	_____	_____
Do you know what to do in case of emergency?	_____	_____
Can you keep from overspending money?	_____	_____
Do you like to entertain guests?	_____	_____
Are you friendly to your neighbors?	_____	_____
Do you like to get involved in helping others?	_____	_____
Can you stand up for your own rights?	_____	_____
Can you get up in the morning on time?	_____	_____
Can you keep appointments and meet deadlines?	_____	_____
Do you have a number of hobbies and interests?	_____	_____
Do you like to pray?	_____	_____