

The Fellowship of Saint John is comprised of nearly 1,000 men and women throughout the world who desire to live their Christian life in special association with the Society of Saint John the Evangelist. They have a vital interest in the life and work of the Society and support our life and ministries with their prayers, encouragement, and financial gifts.

The Brothers of the Society of Saint the Evangelist (ssje.org) welcome members of the Fellowship as partners in the Gospel life, and pray for them by name in our daily worship, following a regular cycle. Together with us they form an extended family, a company of friends abiding in Christ and seeking to bear a united witness to him as "the Way, the Truth and the Life," following the example of the Beloved Disciple.

Why the FSJ?

Men and woman who look to the Society of Saint John the Evangelist for encouragement and inspiration in following our Lord Jesus Christ, and who seek to abide in him by living an ordered life of prayer and service in fellowship with us, may seek to become members of the Fellowship of Saint John. SSJE Brothers and FSJ members share a devotion to the Gospel of John. Here we witness Jesus' friendship with the Beloved Disciple and our own calling to witness the mystery of the Incarnation.

What do members do?

Members of the Fellowship of Saint John seek to live an ordered life of prayer and service in association with the Society, and follow a Rule of Life which expresses a common commitment to faithful discipleship. The Rule of the Fellowship, a basic guideline for the Rule members adapt and follow. The purpose of the Rule is to strengthen our abiding in Christ by bringing rhythm, order, and balance to our discipleship. The Rule helps us to offer the whole of ourselves to God each day and keeps us open to God's love and will for us. Members are encouraged to adapt the Rule to their particular life circumstances, describing for themselves how they will endeavor to live out the Rule. The bond between members of the Fellowship and our Society is spiritual and personal. Members of the Fellowship seek to maintain their personal connection with the SSJE brothers by praying regularly for us, by visiting the houses of the Society when possible, and by keeping up to date with the life and ministry of the community through our *Cowley* magazine.

Rule for the Fellowship of Saint John

Prayer for the Society

The members of the Fellowship of Saint John and the brothers of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist are united in mutual bonds of prayer. Members promise to pray for the Society and its mission every day, commending to the love of God the brothers and those they are called to serve.

Annual Commitment

Members reaffirm their bond with the Society and their commitment to the Rule of the Fellowship annually in writing when they receive the Director's letter.

Reflecting on the Rule of the SSJE

Each member of the Fellowship keeps a copy of the Rule of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist, and over the course of the year takes time to reflect on its teachings, using its guidance for living an ordered life of prayer and service.

The Worshiping Community

The vocation of all Christians is to share and strengthen the common life in the Body of Christ. Each member of the Fellowship is a committed and recognized member of a worshiping community - a parish, chaplaincy or other regular congregation within the Body of Christ - and contributes to its life and ministry.

The Eucharist

Our worship of God finds its fullest expression in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Members participate in the Holy Eucharist on a regular basis, normally every Sunday and on the major celebrations of the Christian year. Those members who belong to Christian denominations which offer fewer opportunities for eucharistic worship take part as often as they can and are faithful to the regular worship of their community.

The Rhythm of Feast and Fast

As far as possible, members of the Fellowship incorporate the rhythm of the Church Year into their worship and devotional life, especially the major feasts of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, and the seasons of Advent and Lent. Our feasts will be holy and joyful if we are prepared to enter from time to time into Jesus' desert fast. Fasting is appropriate on penitential occasions and at times of retreat, reflection or preparation; it is especially recommended during Advent and Lent. Those unable to fast are encouraged to take on some other appropriate discipline.

Personal Prayer

The Holy Spirit, poured into our hearts, inspires in us prayer which embraces the whole of life and draws us into intimate communion with God. Members of the Fellowship adopt a rhythm of regular prayer. Priority is given to securing several opportunities during each week for meditative prayer in which they can open their hearts to the love of Christ and grow in intimacy with him. Four periods of half an hour, or five of twenty minutes, form a basic pattern; some members are drawn to a fuller commitment. Members are also encouraged to incorporate some form of the Daily Office into their prayer, either regularly or occasionally. In praying the Offices of Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayer, Evening Prayer or Compline members join in the round of worship offered by the brothers of the Society.

Study

The pursuit of knowledge is an expression of love for God's world and the riches of revelation. Through regular reading and study, members develop their understanding of the Christian faith in contemporary life, deepen their knowledge of the Scriptures, and nurture their spiritual growth.

Retreat

Times of retreat which enable us to celebrate the primacy of the love of God above all else are essential elements in the rhythm of life. All members are urged to make a three-day silent retreat at least once every year to deepen their life in Christ. 'When circumstances prevent this, a member may choose to observe several quiet days in the year, withdrawing from their usual activities for prayer, stillness, reflection and spiritual reading.

Reconciliation

Members commit themselves to making a searching review of their life of discipleship in the light of the gospel at least twice a year, normally before Christmas and Easter. They express their repentance and experience the forgiveness of God through the rite of Reconciliation where this is available to them. Others will seek the grace of renewal through their own prayer.

Giving

Members of the Fellowship express their gratitude for God's generosity by giving of their time, abilities and money as their life circumstances allow. In the stewardship of their resources, members take into account the needs of the Church, the poor, the Society's ministries and other concerns related to the common welfare. Members take responsibility for avoiding waste and extravagance in their lives and find ways of embodying the simplicity and generosity of Christ.

Health

Jesus came as our healer that we “may have life and have it abundantly.” Members of the Fellowship take responsibility for the maintenance of their health, both for their own sake and out of consideration for the communities in which they live. Regular exercise, diet, rest, appropriate medical attention, creative activities and play all contribute to our physical and mental well-being.

Relationships

A living faith in the Trinity deepens our commitment to the fostering of personal relationships in which we are called to give ourselves and to be open to the gifts of others. In their daily life, members of the Fellowship seek ways to nurture the committed relationships that God has given them, devoting time and energy to their relationships with friends, members of their families, spouses or partners.

Mission and Service

The conversion of our hearts as we seek to follow Christ and abide in his love bears fruit in mission and service. Through prayer and consultation with others, members endeavor to discern ways of using their gifts, abilities and interests in the service of others.

*As the Society acts in the Name of Christ,
wherein the Beloved Disciple found it his joy to live,
so should it be our endeavor to draw others
into the fellowship of the same love
which is the stimulating principle of our own life.*

**Richard Meux Benson,
Founder of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist**

