

## Ten Simple Rules

*I don't like rules, but rules are an essential framework for life as a community. In this prayerful reflection on the 10 commandments, we are called to love people more than rules.*

10 simple rules  
10 commandments  
given on a lofty mountain grand  
chiselled into tablets of stone  
written on the Israelites hearts  
to set the boundaries around human life

School rules and expectations  
class rules negotiated  
between pupil and teacher  
written on notice boards  
fixed to classroom walls  
to set the boundaries for school life

Home rules and targets to work on  
sanctions and treats  
listed next to the weekly calendar  
designed to keep arguments at bay  
and daily chores running smoothly  
to set the boundaries for work and play

Society's rules and morals  
constantly up for debate  
scientific breakthroughs raising questions  
encounters with cultures that think differently  
publicly debating the shifting moral climate  
unsettling the boundaries for civic life

Rules made to be kept  
rules made to be broken  
rules made to stretch and bend  
rules that apply only to some people  
rules that can be ignored when convenient  
rules that don't apply in a climate of terror  
rules that we ignore if faced with an asylum seeker  
rules that can be waived for the right price  
rules overturned by government or court  
rules that affect the poor but exempt the rich  
rules that keep bureaucrats and accountants in employment  
rules that seem point blank stupid  
rules that are absent when a victim needs protection  
rules that are simply not fair!

God who sets the rules and breaks them again  
**Forgive us when we break the rules  
and hurt others in the process**

God who sets the rules and breaks them again  
**Forgive us when we become legalistic**

**and the rule matters more than the people concerned**

God who sets the rules and breaks them again

**Help us to put the rule of love before the rule of law**

**Help us to love you,  
to love our neighbours**

**and to love ourselves.**

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