

# THE FIVE SEASONS

FLOURISHING • SUSTAINABILITY

## Overview

### What Happens in the Vineyard

**Each of the five seasons in the vineyard is a preparation for the next season.** The predictable, seasonal cycle happens year after year and always includes a season of dormancy. The weather in each season creates a context for the growth of the vines and can present a gift or a struggle. The vineyard crew carefully stewards each vine throughout the seasons, keeping the vines stressed, but healthy. Cutting happens in every season for various reasons: pruning canes, suckering, tucking, leafing, dropping fruit, and so on. With each passing year, as the carefully tended vines mature, they produce higher quality fruit, all for one purpose... making wine!

- **Spring** is a season of wild, new growth, bursting forth from the tiny buds that developed in secret the previous year. The shoots and leaves must be **cultivated** and trained.
- **Summer** brings long, hot months of slow, steady **growth**. Finally, veraison happens and we know harvest is a few weeks away.
- **Harvest** is a short, intense season. At the right time, all the fruit of the past year's labor is **harvested**. This is the winemaker's only chance, once a year, to fulfill her purpose!
- **Fall** is a tender, beautiful season in the **liminal** time between harvest and winter as the days grow shorter and the vine shows its true colors as it prepares to rest.
- **Winter** vines are **dormant** and starkly pruned. The hope of harvest is embedded in the tiny buds while the cover crop nourishes and protects the roots for longevity.

### As a Metaphor

The metaphor of seasons is helpful in our lives, leadership, and businesses. **Sustainability depends on engaging the predictable micro and macro cycles in our lives, especially the rhythm of rest.** Understanding our purpose, leveraging our context, attending to holistic health and character development, embracing change, and eliminating what is no longer useful to make room for something new will result in fruitfulness.

- **Spring** is a time of **preparation** and starting something. It can sometimes feel chaotic and out of control. New ideas, new individuals, new programs, new activities abound.
- **Summer** is the long season of diligence and discipline that leads to **transformation**.
- **Harvest** brings everything together in a moment of **integration** as the purpose of the hard work is made visible and accessible.
- **Fall** is a time of **transition**, a time of authenticity, between outward fruitfulness and inward restoration as we await another season of fruitfulness.
- **Winter**, as a season of **rest**, is often overlooked as the most important season that contributes to long-term sustainability.

### Reflection

*There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens.  
~Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NIV)*

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