

## **Wrighton and Lynch Chapels Minister's Website Article September 2021**

How burdened are you? Do you feel weighed down with cares? We all carry different burdens. There's the burden of secret sin, the burden of possessions and also, for many, the burden of busyness. Many people discovered a period of rest during lockdown, and found it very good for them. But, busyness creeps back. How, then do we steward our time?

Now and then we do stop and say, 'Time for a holiday.' That's good for us, but remember the word 'holiday' comes from 'holy day' - a sacred day put aside for the celebration of what is most important in life. It is for recalibrating our lives; for spending energy more wisely, considering what's most important, aside from the mundane.

In the bible, holidays were times when God's people would come together, feast and celebrate, or have a day of mourning and repentance. Either way, it was using energy to recalibrate their lives to what's important.

We often think of holidays as times to catch up on rest. 'I need a holiday.' But, when you go on a holiday, what do you do? You want to have fun, explore, get every ounce of your money's worth. Then you get home and say, 'I need a holiday to get over my holiday.'

Holidays aren't for catching up on rest - we should do that more regularly. The bible shows God saying, 'I want my people to be well rested ALL the time.'

Think of the Sabbath - the Sunday for Christians. It's weekly. In that, God says, 'Catch up on your rest every week. Feeling overtaxed shouldn't last for over a week. That is really important. Even when he created the world, God modelled that idea - he rested on the seventh day. He was saying, 'I'm showing that life is not just about productivity. It's about pausing to celebrate all you have done.' God stops and says, 'This is good.' Having a day to celebrate the life you live is as important as the productivity that got you there.

Whatever you do to pause and celebrate, that should be woven into the weekly rhythm of your life. In the Old Testament, the commandment about honouring the Sabbath had a strange penalty for breaking it. God says, 'If you don't rest as you should, the penalty is death.' I don't think God means, 'If you don't celebrate properly, I will snuff out your life.' Instead it's, 'If you don't rest properly, you'll die. You'll die spiritually, emotionally, physically, and - most important - you will die to your relationship with me.'

We mustn't get legalistic about Sabbath celebrations, as that can then become a burden - which is what the Sabbath was meant to prevent. Yet Jesus challenged the Pharisees, 'Don't turn biblical teaching into a heavy burden you cannot bear.'

Think about it. How can you rest, properly? How can you celebrate what is important? How can you listen to God, and know his presence, if you are making yourself too busy? Those are important questions.

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