

MAKING HOLIDAYS HOLY DAYS

Mark 6:30-31

INTRODUCTION

- It is well known that inadequate rest and sleep can have serious health consequences.
- Our bodies are designed to have times of rest and rejuvenation.
- Being able to “get away from it all” and taking a break from our work and duties is something that many people look forward to.
- Does the Bible have anything to say about rest from work?
- There are many exhortations in the Scripture to be busy, labouring, working, serving, etc.
- Is it right to take time off from our labour, or should we feel guilty about taking that holiday to some far away location?
- And does the Bible give us any guidance in the right use of our rest times, so that they are sanctified and pleasing to Him?
- In Mark 6:7-13, Jesus had sent the twelve apostles to preach and to heal.
- This is sometimes called “The Limited Commission” as they were sent only to the Israelites.
- In vv.14-29 is the account of the martyrdom of John the Baptist
- The news of John’s death came as a devastating blow to the disciples.
- At the same time there were multitudes of people thronging the Lord, hearing Him preach, being healed of him, to the point where they had no leisure to meditate, pray, converse with one another, or to even eat.
- It was at this moment that the Lord intervened to put a stop to their work and call them to rest.
- Jesus, as God, knows our needs *intellectually* (Psalm 103:14; 139:1-16)
- Jesus, as Man, knows our needs *experientially* (Hebrews 4:15)

- He knows what it is to be hungry (Matthew 4:2) and weary (John 4:6)
- He knows what human sorrow and grief is (Isaiah 53:3; Matthew 26:38)
- We must carefully consider the principles in the word of God to make sure our holidays are holy days.

I. THE INSTITUTION OF REST

- A. The example of the creation week
 1. God rested the seventh day (Genesis 2:2)
 2. Not because He was tired, but as an example
- B. The Sabbath commandment to Israel (Exodus 20:9-11)
 1. The word Sabbath means "to desist," "cease," "rest"
 2. The Sabbath was made for man's benefit (Mark 2:27)
 3. Sabbath violation was a capital crime (Numbers 15:32-36)
 4. This is because it was a sign of God's covenant with Israel (Exodus 31:13-17)
- C. Israel's various feasts involved days of rest from labour
- D. The sabbatical year (Leviticus 25:4)
- E. The Jubilee year (Leviticus 25:11-12)
- F. For the Christian, the Lord's Day is the weekly rest from labour (Revelation 1:10)
- G. Nature itself teaches us the need for rest
 1. Day and night
 2. The four seasons (Ecclesiastes 3:1)
- H. "Change" is an important element in rest
 1. "Come apart" – to somewhere else

2. This might be change of place, of occupation, of company, of routine, etc.

II. THE INTENTION TO REJUVENATE

A. Rest is God's reward for those who labour (6:12,13,30)

1. Those who refuse to work do not deserve to rest (2 Thessalonians 3:10)
2. The sleep of a labouring man is sweet (Ecclesiastes 5:12)
3. Rest must be taken at the appropriate time and season (Proverbs 10:5; 2 Samuel 11:1)

B. We suffer if we do not have adequate rest

1. Physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually

C. Rest prepares us for more work

D. Rest should be a time of spiritual communion with the Lord

1. "Come apart", not "Go apart" – they were to be with Jesus
2. A holiday from work ought not be a holiday from God
3. It should be a time to draw nearer to the Lord
4. Compare Mary and Martha – "one thing is needful" (Luke 10:42)

E. Rest can be a time of fellowship with God's people

1. Note "ye yourselves" not "thou thyself"
2. The church would be together in their rest

F. Those that refuse to rest may have rest forced upon them

1. God sent the Jews to Babylon for neglecting to rest the land over 490 years (Leviticus 26:33-35; 2 Chronicles 36:21)
2. The Shepherd "maketh me to lie down in green pastures" (Psalm 23:2)

G. What we do with our leisure time shows what is important to us (Psalms 34:1)

III. INTERRUPTIONS AND OUR RESPONSE

- A. The journey itself can be a time of rejuvenation (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)
 - 1. Their journey was a short sail across the sea
 - 2. Yet the people outran them
 - 3. The few hours on the ship with the Lord was all the rest they had
- B. Ministry opportunities can come at any time
 - 1. They didn't turn the people away because it was "after hours"
 - 2. The rest is not the objective – the rest prepares us for more work
- C. We never take a break from doing the will of God (2 Timothy 4:2)

IV. THE INTERMINABLE REPOSE

- A. At present our times of rest are temporary
- B. But one day there will be an eternal rest (Revelation 14:13)
- C. Until then, we are to always about in the work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58)

CONCLUSION

- 1. The wicked have no rest or peace (Isaiah 57:20-21)
- 2. Christ calls sinners who labour under the burden of sin and dead works to come to Him for rest (Matthew 11:28-30)
- 3. Each of us must examine ourselves to know if we have entered into His rest (Hebrews 4:1)
- 4. Believers are called to always abound in God's work, yet times of rest are required to be most effective
- 5. The Christian life is not a sprint, but a long distance race that must be "run with patience" (Hebrews 12:1)
- 6. We must use these times of rest to prepare spiritually for battle (Ephesians 6:10-13)
- 7. Whether working or resting, do all to the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31)