

July 7, 2024

Learning to Rest

Exodus 16:22-30

I'm writing this while the rest of my family is on vacation. I have a multitude of excuses for why I didn't join them, but the word *busy* plays into most of them. Next week I'm slated to fly to Maine for my husband's family reunion. I've schemed and bargained to try to get out of it, but he won't let me off the hook. I don't know why I'm so desperate to avoid it. I love Maine. I love his family. I love traveling. There's just so much to catch up on at home.

With my head down, I think it's my shoulders that are holding the ceiling up over my family's head. I think I'm the one who's keeping everything together. I'm working hard. I'm busy. It's me. It's not until I step away that I can lift my head and realize it wasn't me holding the weight at all. God was providing for us the whole time, whether I was sleepless and bleary-eyed or well-rested. God created this body with certain requirements, rest being a major one. Medical science affirms what the Bible has been telling us all along: When we don't observe sabbath, we suffer consequences from stress, lack of sleep, and anxiety. I know I do. I'm not much use to anyone when I'm overworked for too long. We all need a break.

Sabbath isn't something God takes lightly, either. God didn't give us the sabbath as a benefit like vacation days to take if we felt like it. Sabbath is a commandment. It's on our top-ten list. "The LORD said to Moses, 'How long will you refuse to obey my commandments and instructions?'" (Exodus 16:28). When I look at it in that light, I don't feel guilty about leaving my unfinished to-do list at home. I know that when I return from the lobster rolls and cool air of Maine, I'll be able to tackle it with even more intensity because I'll be well-rested and renewed.

1. Has your work or family life been affected by lack of rest? How?
2. The student book author writes that today we desperately need mental rest or sabbath. What are examples of a "mental sabbath" you can practice?
3. How can you practice the sabbath with your community for the remainder of the summer?

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