

CREATION
FEST

RHYTHMS
OF
FAITH
Rest

A RHYTHMS GUIDE BY CREATION FEST
AUGUST 2023

RHYTHMS OF FAITH

This summer at Creation Fest, we explored Rhythms of Faith. To enable you and your community to join us in this journey, we are launching monthly rhythm guides to explore a particular aspect of what it means for us to walk in daily rhythms. In this guide, we'll be exploring the Rhythm of Rest post Creation Fest.

ARE YOU TIRED? WORN OUT? BURNED OUT ON RELIGION? COME TO ME. GET AWAY WITH ME AND YOU'LL RECOVER YOUR LIFE. I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO TAKE A REAL REST. WALK WITH ME AND WORK WITH ME— WATCH HOW I DO IT. LEARN THE UNFORCED RHYTHMS OF GRACE. I WON'T LAY ANYTHING HEAVY OR ILL-FITTING ON YOU. KEEP COMPANY WITH ME AND YOU'LL LEARN TO LIVE FREELY AND LIGHTLY.

MATTHEW 28-30 (THE MESSAGE)

Our prayer is that these guides would enable you to find new ways to rest deep in the rhythm of the created and creating God, the one who has designed us for relationship and is walking daily with us.



A RHYTHMS GUIDE PREPARED BY

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MAIN STAGE SPEAKER 2023



RHYTHMS OF REST

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In 1965, the United States Congress held a lengthy hearing to discuss what government would need to do and change in order to adapt to the future of the work week. They had reports saying that due to the rise in automation, by the year 2000, people would only work 20 hours a week. True story, they thought that the national infrastructure of the nation would need to be changed as they feared parks would be overcrowded and motorways jammed.

Fast forward to the year 2023, and this all seems laughable. The truth is, when it comes to work, busyness, and exhaustion, we seem to be worse than ever before.

And even if you are not working hard, you feel guilty about not working hard. Some current studies reveal that many people experience the same feeling of guilt when they are not working that they would if they were lying to a loved one.

How do we address this problem of exhaustion? The answer isn't just to take a holiday, which is more often like a distraction. What we need is the kind of rest the Bible talks about. And it may come as a surprise that it's a command. It's called Sabbath, and we read about it when God spoke to his people through Moses after their deliverance from Egypt:

HE SAID TO THEM, "THIS IS WHAT THE LORD COMMANDED: 'TOMORROW IS TO BE A DAY OF SABBATH REST, A HOLY SABBATH TO THE LORD. SO BAKE WHAT YOU WANT TO BAKE AND BOIL WHAT YOU WANT TO BOIL. SAVE WHATEVER IS LEFT AND KEEP IT UNTIL MORNING.' SO BEAR IN MIND THAT THE LORD HAS GIVEN YOU THE SABBATH; THAT IS WHY ON THE SIXTH DAY HE GIVES YOU BREAD FOR TWO DAYS. EVERYONE IS TO STAY WHERE THEY ARE ON THE SEVENTH DAY; NO ONE IS TO GO OUT." SO THE PEOPLE RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY.
EXODUS 16:29-30

Immediately after the children of Israel were delivered from the tyrant Pharaoh, God commanded them to keep the Sabbath, a day of rest from work. So, what does a sabbath mean? And what does it tell us about rest?

REST IS ABOUT...

REST IS ABOUT...

REST IS ABOUT...

Confrontation

We worship a God who is not like the Pharaoh of Egypt, who endlessly drove the Israelites to productivity as a harsh taskmaster. And in commanding a rhythm of rest, we learn, as Walter Brueggemann once put it, that "(a) that God is not a workaholic, (b) that God is not anxious about the full functioning of creation, and (c) that the well-being of creation does not depend on endless work."

We may not live under a Pharaoh, but in the Western world, we live in a performance-driven society where our work often defines us and where we usually get our sense of identity from our achievements.

The principle of Sabbath and taking rest is about confrontation. Taking regular, weekly time to rest reminds you that you are not defined by what you do but by who you are in relation to the God who made you.

Brueggemann again describes the sabbath as resistance, saying, "In our own contemporary context of the rat race of anxiety, the celebration of Sabbath is an act of both resistance and alternative. It is resistance because it is a visible insistence that our lives are not defined by production and consumption."

In choosing to rest, we confront the idol of achievement and productivity... or the idol of thinking it all depends on us. But that is not all that is at stake when God commands rest.

REST IS ABOUT...

REST IS ABOUT...

REST IS ABOUT...

Celebration

What was the first thing the nation of Israel did when they were delivered from the slavery of Egypt? They worshiped God and rejoiced in His deliverance. In sabbath rest, we not only reflect on what our priorities are, but we also rejoice by receiving what God has already provided. This is what brings rest to our souls.

And that is why Jesus is our ultimate sabbath rest, for his work on the cross and through his resurrection gives us rest in our work.

According to the gospel, our sins have been paid for, and our future is secure. In short, Christ's work has already provided for our greatest need. When we stop working and celebrate this fact, we find deep rest for our exhausted hearts. Even sleep becomes an act of worship! For we lay down our heads acknowledging that we don't run the universe, God does.

So, accepting God's invitation to regular and intentional rest means confronting the idea that your livelihood all depends on you. It also means recalibrating your heart and mind according to God's Word and rejoicing that God has made you his own through Christ!

And when you go to sleep at night, you can consider it an act of worship as you praise the God who works all things for your good according to his will. Yes, even while you rest.

 **AND THE BEAT GOES ON**

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Reflection Questions

1. WHERE DO WE NEED TO CONFRONT THE IDOLATRY OF WORK?

TAKE SOME TIME THIS WEEK AND WRITE DOWN HOW OUR UNHEALTHY CULTURE OF ENDLESS WORK HAS AFFECTED YOU.

2. WHERE DO WE NEED TO RE-CALIBRATE OUR VALUES?

CHOOSE A BIBLE READING PLAN, AND SPECIFICALLY, ON A DAY OF REST, WRITE DOWN SOME THINGS THAT GOD WANTS YOU TO RE-PRIORITIZE IN THIS SEASON OF YOUR LIFE.

3. WHERE DO WE NEED TO CELEBRATE THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS?

FIND A PLACE, WHETHER BY YOURSELF OR WITH OTHERS, TO FOCUS ON SINGING TO THE LORD AND WORSHIPPING HIM FOR ALL HE HAS DONE, IS DOING, AND WILL DO FOR YOU.

 **AND THE BEAT GOES ON**