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JUNE 2018

***Stewardship of our leisure time***

*I commend enjoyment, for there is nothing better for people under the sun than to eat, and drink, and enjoy themselves, for this will go with them in their toil through the days of life that God gives them under the sun.* **Ecclesiastes 8:15**

Busy-ness keeps us from living with joy and peace in today’s 24/7 world, but Scripture reminds us that this is hardly new. Ecclesiastes was written some 2,500 years ago! Ecclesiastes does not give license for mindless pleasure-seeking, but rather affirms that our hard work should be balanced with time for relaxation and enjoyment with friends and family.

Saints and mystics have long touted the need for rest and renewal. In the monastic tradition it’s referred to as *otium sanctum* – Holy Leisure. Not just wasting our free time, but using it for renewal. As steward/disciples, we aim to use our leisure time wisely. Here are some ideas:

**Keep the Sabbath:** God actually *commands* us to stop working one day per week, as Exodus 20:8-11 makes clear. It’s one of the Top Ten! Though we are prohibited from *working* on the Sabbath, there is no prohibition against leisure. (Why else would God give us a day off?)

**Plan your vacation:** Even if you’re taking simple STAYcation, *plan* your time for maximum rest and enjoyment. Visit local museums or historic places. Take day trips to local parks, mountains or waterways. Invite friends or family over. Select books to read, movies to stream and games to play.

**Manage your schedule:** Are you a slave to your appointment book, driven by *other people’s* priorities? Put yourself first – scheduling in time for leisure. Even if it’s just 30 minutes here and there, make – and take – time for yourself!

**Find an activity you like:** What do you do just for you? Exercise? Read? Scrapbook? Play an instrument? Walk? Fish? Discover – or REdiscover – what brings you joy, then make time to do it.

**Socialize:** Friends and family make life enjoyable. Spend time with them. Ideas: a hike, a picnic, a meal on your deck, drinks under the stars, a game of cards or a board game.

**Invest, don’t waste, time:** Many activities pass the time but don’t give back much in renewal or refreshment. Choose activities wisely.

God expects us to work, but not work ourselves to death. Sabbath and leisure time provide means for us to find balance in our life, as well as friendship, love, renewal and purpose.

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