

...learn from Me the unforced rhythms of grace...

LOVING *Jesus said "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: You shall love your neighbour as yourself." (Mark 12:30-31)*

Resting - How will I restore myself through refreshment and recreation, inspired by the life-giving pattern of 'Sabbath rest'?

Talk/Video

'As yourself'. 'As YOURSELF!' How hard these words are for us to hear when the foundation of our Christian faith is to love others as Christ has loved us, sacrificially – even to death; to esteem others higher than ourselves and even to love our enemies. We can feel as if we are not just the last on the list, but not even appearing on our *own* list. If we do not feel we have made A.N.Other's list this can leave us feeling that we are endlessly giving out without anyone taking care of us and that is a recipe that is ripe for resentment.

Yet Jesus is teaching us to look after ourselves in the very same moment that He calls us to love and care for others. If we go back to Genesis that same message is woven into creation itself: 'And on the seventh day God finished the work that God had done, and God rested on the seventh day from all the work that God had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that God had done in creation' (Genesis 2:2-3) and that message is *rest*.

I recently read a book called *Why We Sleep* by Matthew Walker. It took me months to pick up as it sounded a bit boring, to be honest, but once I picked it up I could not put it down. It was absolutely fascinating because it is chock full of these incredible medical studies about how incredibly good for you sleep is. Sleep helps you to retain memories, to heal cells, to flush out toxins from your brain, to resolve trauma, to file learning into long term memory, to learn languages, find creative solutions to problems and even makes your immune system categorically more effective at fighting off bugs and viruses. In short, sleep is nothing less than miraculous. When God calls us to rest for a minimum of 24hrs this is not just a 'down tools' and change of pace to domestic work, perhaps. This is the gift of all of those possibilities wrapped up into the extraordinary gift of rest.

I don't mind admitting that whenever the weather allows it, my hammock is out on a Sunday afternoon, strung between a hedge and a tree, that we can all take turns at simply resting, gazing up through the leaves at an ever-changing sky, letting the world go by with nowhere to go and nothing to do. Naturally, there is lots to do and many places to go in all reality, but - like the hammock - these demands are all suspended while we really rest, enjoy one another's company, a book, birdsong, the breeze, a conversation, time to think or even just snooze... allowing ourselves to be refuelled for all that awaits once our feet again touch the ground.