

## **2022 17<sup>TH</sup> JULY – WORSHIP AT HOME – A RHYTHM OF RUSHING AND RESTING**

Dear friends,

I think the title her says it all – our lives can be very busy and we keep on going – but there come times when we have to rest or we just crash and burn. Here we explore the importance of how to use our time – of achieving a healthy balance between having compassion and concern for others while still maintaining appropriate self-care for this can be a lifelong struggle. Learning the importance of this balance is vitally important. I hope that we can all find this balance in your lives.

Every blessing, *Margaret*

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### **Call to worship:**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Come away.....and rest a while.'

Come into the Lord's presence now – away from the stresses and strains of life.

Come with open arms, and receive the rest that Jesus offers – to restore our souls, and to equip us for whatever comes next. **Amen.**

O God, you are our shepherd. Your care and compassion were shown in the life of Jesus.

We ask that, this very day, we may experience the rest you offer, the peace that can restore and revive us, and enable us to live the promised abundant life. **Amen.**

God, our loving Father, who gently guides and leads us, restore our souls today as we worship you. Let us not hurry, but sit at your feet, gazing upon your lovely face. **Amen.**

### **The words to 'Dear Lord and Father of mankind' written by John Greenleaf Whittier [1807-1892] StF 495**

1 Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways,  
reclothe us in our rightful mind,  
in purer lives thy service find in deeper reverence, praise.

2 In simple trust like theirs who heard beside the Syrian sea  
the gracious calling of the Lord,  
let us, like them, without a word, rise up and follow thee.

3 O sabbath rest by Galilee! O calm of hills above,  
where Jesus knelt to share with thee,  
the silence of eternity, interpreted by love!

4 With that deep hush subduing all our words and works that drown  
the tender whisper of thy call,  
as noiseless let thy blessing fall as fell thy manna down

5 Drop thy still dews of quietness, till all our strivings cease;  
take from our souls the strain and stress,  
and let our ordered lives confess the beauty of thy peace.

6 Breathe through the heats of our desire thy coolness and thy balm;  
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;  
speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire, O still, small voice of calm!

### **Prayers:**

Jesus, our Shepherd, who makes us lie down in green pastures – who leads us beside still waters – who restores our souls; you anoint our heads with oil and our cup overflows.

We worship and adore you, King of kings and Lord of lords. **Amen.**

Gracious God, you always make time for us – we are sorry that we don't always make time for you.

When we are rushing round being busy, sometimes even when we are doing your work, we forget about you.

We are sorry when we make our lives so full that there is no room left for you – no room to get away and to be in a quiet place with you.

Forgive us, Lord, and help us not to hurry but to slow down – to make space for you to dwell within us.

And in that dwelling place, may we seek what you want us to do and who you want us to spend time with.

Help us to get the right balance – a right rhythm that is in tune with you. **Amen.**

Even though we have gone astray, you are our Shepherd – the one who brings us back to the fold.

We are assured of your forgiveness, and we are set free in the knowledge that you always make room for us. **Amen.**

Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come - thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **Mark 6: 30-34 and 53-56:**

Verses 30-34: The apostles gathered round Jesus and reported to him all that they had done and taught.

Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them: ‘come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.’

So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But many who saw them leaving recognised them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

Verses 53-56: Later, when they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognised Jesus. They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went – into villages, towns, or countryside – they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

**Comment:** This week we have two short pieces of text which are often overlooked because they are the connecting verses between more prominent stories. The Sea of Galilee is rather like a huge Scottish loch. If someone had access to a boat, it would be easy to row or sail across to another place. Unfortunately, because of the hilly ground around the lake, anyone watching from the shore would have a good view of your progress and could make an educated guess at where you were going to land. Therefore he, or she, could make the journey on foot to greet you.

This is what happened when Jesus took the disciples away to a quiet place so that they could rest.

However, the crowds got there before them. Jesus, rather than being annoyed, had compassion for these people who were desperate to receive his teaching and guidance.

However, he did take time to be alone when the crowds had gone – even sending the disciples away in the boat while he went up into the mountains alone [verses 45-46]. The next time that the boat landed and Jesus walked on the shore, the same thing happened

– many people rushed to be near him and to ask him for healing.

Jesus was concerned that his disciples should go somewhere to rest – and this shows the balance of the Christian life which is built up by turning to the presence of God for refreshment, renewal, and guidance –

and then going out to the people. David Adam says: 'The Christian learns to go to God with people in their heart, and to people with God in their heart.'

There are two main dangers we face. The first is that of constant activity – and some church groups are like that. But no-one can work without rest – and no-one can proclaim God unless they spend time quietly with him – else we run out of resources because they haven't learnt to be quiet before God. It is then that we gain the strength that he gives us.

On the other hand, the other danger is that of too much withdrawal. Devotion should lead to action. Awareness of God and his love should make us proclaim his goodness – prayer should lead us to work. To turn to God is not to turn away from our fellow beings but is to prepare us for caring and sharing with them in a better way.

### **Meditation of Matthew:**

He was concerned for the multitude, we knew that, for he had ministered to them so often, responding to the broken in body, mind, and spirit – and bringing hope and healing. But he was equally concerned about us – about our wholeness too.

We'd forgotten that in our excitement, too focused on our newfound mission after he sent us out to preach and teach in his name. Some of us had travelled miles, determined to cover the most ground – reach the most people – win the most converts; each vying to outdo the other, almost as if it were a competition. We meant well, of course, but looking back, I realise it was too much about us and too little about him – as though everything depended on our efforts. You should have seen us when we got together again. Like excited schoolchildren we were – each desperate to share what we'd been up to and to win his plaudits – but he gently quietened us, urging us first to get some rest and take some food.

The message was simple: we were called to serve, not run ourselves into the ground – called to minister to *others* but also to take care of *ourselves*. And to do that, we needed time and space for reflection – time and space for God.

He didn't ram the point home, but gently offered guidance – and events were to prove him right, for, before we knew it, the crowds were on us again – jostling – seeking – demanding. We realised then, more than ever, the wisdom of his words – the importance of physical and spiritual refreshment.

Work for God's kingdom, certainly – do what you can to bring it nearer – but don't think it depends entirely on you. Make time for yourself as well as others, or else you'll be no use to anyone, including him.

**Prayer:** Loving God, among the duties and concerns of another day, we can so easily forget you – failing to make time simply to be still and to focus on your presence. We rush from one thing to another and forget what is most important: communion with you. Even tasks undertaken in your service – involvement in the life and work of your Church – can suck us into a vortex of frenetic activity. It is well meant and sincerely offered – yet it ultimately draws us away from prayer and devotion – from relating to you one to one. Teach us that, for our physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being, we need sometimes to step back from the world and to recognise that you are God – for if we lose sight of that, we lose sight of everything.

**Amen.**

We thank you, Lord, that you always had time for people. Even when you were tired and needed a rest, when the crowds gathered your compassionate heart healed and restored all those who came to you. We thank you that you are kind and caring and lavish your love upon us. Your self-giving love has set us free to be the people you have called us to be.

We thank you that you are present in the big and small things of our lives – in the ordinary, everyday times, in the extraordinary and special times, and in the dark and difficult times. You never leave us or forsake us. We thank you that we can rest in you and regain our strength for the work ahead, to bring your kingdom ever closer. **Amen.**

**The words to 'Let there be love' written by Dave Bilbrough. Songs of Fellowship 329**

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Let there be love shared among us.  
Let there be love in our eyes.  
May now your love sweep this nation,  
Cause us, O Lord, to arise.  
Give us a fresh understanding  
Of brotherly love that is real;  
Let there be love shared among us.  
Let there be love.

**Closing Prayer and Blessing:**

O God, in Scripture we read that you rested on the seventh day –  
after all the busyness and work of creation,  
and we read of Jesus' desire for his disciples to rest.  
As your followers, your disciples, now,  
and as we return to our busy lives,  
may we know the rest you offer  
every day of this week. **Amen.**

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us  
and all those for whom we pray, this day and for ever more. **Amen.**