

Rest is vital for the healing of the body and the mind. Without rest, burnout is inevitable, mood swings are unavoidable, and lethargy is persistent.

Life

You decide you want to go on holiday. You arrange to take time off from work. Search for an appropriate destination. Check your insurance. Ensure that you have had your jabs. Purchase the ticket. Buy needed items for the journey. Book kennels for the pets. Arrange transportation to and from the airport.

You arrive at the airport, but don't anticipate the queues. You're checked in online, but need to drop off your bags. You stand in line for an eternity, agitated. The airport ground stewards are unhelpful and obviously overstretched. Finally, you place your bags on the self-service baggage check-in. Scan your boarding pass.

The message on the screen says, *'Flight closed. Speak to a member of staff.'*

You're furious. You arrived on time and made all your preparation, but still you missed the flight. You reluctantly rebook for tomorrow, check in at the airport hotel and spend the day . . . resting.

It's then you discover that, despite your inordinate planning for the holiday, you forgot one vital element. Rest.

You planned the 'before', 'during' and 'after' activities of the beach holiday, but little thought was given to the need for rest, rejuvenation and restoration of body and mind.

What is rest?

Tiredness is the pandemic of the 21st century. Life balance is evasive. A plethora of adverts and shorts on social media challenge our attention span. Online meetings drain mental energy. The daily dose of sitting in front of computer

screens or hunched over tablets and phones saps our physical strength.

Few of us have achieved balance in our lives as our work and family lives merge imperceptibly. The demise of the de-stressing family meal around the dining table, and the rise of being ever present and continually alert to the snare of invasive mobile devices and AI derivatives creates an overwhelming source of exhaustion.

The Greek philosopher Socrates said, 'Beware the barrenness of a busy life.' The wisdom of his generation is applicable to urban life today.

The Antidote

Most answers to life's challenges are simple. For busyness and overwork, it's rest. But how do we create a space for meaningful rest, rejuvenation and restoration? It's simple: Take a weekly day off. Stop.

Avoid the hustle and bustle of shopping. Switch off from social media. Prepare your main meal the day before so you keep cooking to a minimum. Instead of vegetating in front of the TV, venture into nature, walk and watch your heart rate slow down. Create a meaningful community with family and like-minded friends. That's a Sabbath!

Sabbath

In Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), the Sabbath is not only a day of religious observance but a time of abstinence from work and from busyness.

'Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Work six days and do everything you need to do. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to God, your God. Don't do any work – not you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your servant, nor your maid, nor your animals, not even the



foreign guest visiting in your town. For in six days God made Heaven, Earth, and sea, and everything in them; he rested on the seventh day. Therefore God blessed the Sabbath day; he set it apart as a holy day.'

(Exodus 20:8-11, The Message)

Rest from the mundanity of work was strongly encouraged alongside the observable devotion to God. This is Sabbath: a two-fold purposeful detour from the busy pathway of life to spend time with God while allowing the body to be rested, rejuvenated and restored.

So, is the Sabbath just about God?

God wants to spend time with people. We can talk with Him through prayer on a daily basis, but there's nothing quite like spending quality time together. One biblical writer describes this time with God as 'a delight and . . . honourable' (Isaiah 58:13).

Wow. Imagine having 24 hours to spend with God every week. What difference would that make to our families? Communities? Our nation?

Just think about the conversations, the debates, what knowledge we would glean, and what discoveries we'd make. Maybe we wouldn't blame Him any longer for all the world's problems.

And what about me?

A break from the weekly chaos is beneficial for our minds and bodies. A study showed that the real benefit of taking time off was *detachment* from work, not just 'not working'.

The Sabbath was 'made to meet the needs of people . . .' (Mark 2:27, NLT). The Sabbath is a time to switch off, to exhale the challenges of a busy week and inhale the fragrance of rest, rejuvenation and restoration. This is Sabbath. This is the *Rest of Your Life*.

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