

Rest

Rest is difficult even for those who are retired. We learn to judge ourselves and others by how much work gets done. We often hear and use the mantra: “I’m so busy.” It is rarer to hear someone say, “I get enough sleep.” If work is how we rank ourselves in our social system and in our value as people, then rest will be a second-tier priority. We will pass up opportunities to rest because it will appear that we are not keeping up with the Joneses. How might we break that cycle? First, we need to make a commitment to get out of the stream of work and tasks. Next, we need to be supported by people who will encourage us and not judge us for resting.

Here are some suggestions to engage this practice in your life:

1. Set a day or time of a day that you don’t work

In the Book of Common Prayer, it says about sabbath keeping “to set aside regular times for worship, prayer, and the study of God’s ways.” This suggestion follows in that tradition. Jesus often taught about sabbaths and that we need to be careful to celebrate the benefits of a regular practice and not worship the rule. If there is a need, it should not be ignored because of one’s sabbath rules. I would suggest that you try to carve out a regular activity that is restful. That might be worship at St. Patrick’s, it might be reading the newspaper every morning, or it might be taking a long walk. Vacations are certainly restful and should be integrated in your annual calendar, but that shouldn’t be the only periods of restfulness. Do several things on a daily and weekly basis, or you will forget to be at rest.

2. Take up a hobby

There was a time in my life where I would take on “hobbies” that I could use to accomplish more work. That is skirting the purpose of a hobby. Hobbies should be something that you enjoy so much that you would do it even if no one needed you to do it. Several years ago, I started playing board games as a hobby. I enjoy how it allows me to escape from the worries of my work life and it brings me rest. Time seems to melt away as I do it. That does not mean it is great for everyone. Some people like collecting things, visiting museums, listening to music, or exercising. Explore a hobby that you think might get you out of the busy. One online resource for groups of nearby people gathering together around interests is [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com).

3. Set limits on social media/technology/e-mail communication

Children are often put on electronic device curfews and timeouts, but adults are not as diligent monitoring their own behavior. Disconnecting from these devices at certain times of day or at events like family dinner might help us rest from the 24 hour-a-day cycle. A couple of ways to think about this: 1. Don’t look at emails after a certain time every night, 2. Break from social media for Lent, 3. Turn off notifications on your cell phone for anything except phone calls.