



Restful Church

Restful Church: Part of the “Slow Church” Series

- WEEK FOUR: STARTING JUNE 30 -

OVERVIEW:

“Often people hear “worship” and assume that means singing Bethel songs all day while reading the Bible and practicing intercessory prayer. That’s all great stuff. But I mean worship in the wide wholistic sense of the word. Expand your list of the spiritual disciplines to including eating a burrito on the patio or drinking a bottle of wine with your friends over a long, lazy dinner or walking on the beach with your lover or best friend - anything to index your heart toward grateful recognition of God’s reality and goodness.”

- John Mark Comer

This is our final week talking about living as a Restful Church. At this month’s Celebration we talked about what happens if, like Jesus, Sabbath becomes a core practice in our lives and what the core components of Sabbath are. Stop. Rest. Delight. Worship. Each component presents its unique challenges and abundant benefits.

As we talk about worship I would encourage you to reread the quote from John Mark Comer above. Worship can sound boring to us because we have a limited definition of

what worship is. So when we hear about a day of worship we shouldn't think about oppressive or boring church obligations but rather practices which help us live with God in gratitude and all his goodness.

This is key to Sabbath. The reason why Sabbath is so restful is exactly because it's a day of worship. When we live our days in connection with God they are more peaceful, more satisfying, more stabilizing and more rewarding. I think this is what Jesus is talking about when he encourages us to remain in connection with him.

"Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine and you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:4-5

Jesus' view of worship is expansive. He wants connection with us so that he can renew us. Every single day, but especially a whole day each week of intentional time. So what will that time of worship look like as you stop, rest and delight?

I do think time in scripture and prayer are baseline for connection with Jesus. But these can look different for each of us and be joy filled rather than joyless. It's all about connection with Jesus rather than getting through a passage or saying "Amen" without losing your train of thought. I would encourage you to make extra time for scripture and prayer on Sabbath so you can really slow down and be with Jesus.

Then as you go throughout your day live with a posture of praise and gratitude. Play date with the kids? Revel in the gift they are and how they enrich your life. Eating a great meal? Cherish the taste and thank God for thinking of that flavor. Enjoying a hobby or movie? Remember that in God's reality every single person will flourish and live with freedom and love and joy.

Worship is all about connection and that can happen any where at any time. But when we intentionally set aside time and set our minds on worshiping God something changes inside of us. We begin to experience the restfulness that Jesus carried and live all seven days differently.

Let's rest and worship.

- Jacob

DAILY READING:

Today: Psalm 103

Thursday: 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Friday: Isaiah 25:1

Saturday: John 4:1-26

Sunday: Break

Monday: Mark 7:1-23

Tuesday: Hebrews 4:14-16

WEEKLY PRAYER:

Holy, Loving Father, it is good to give you thanks and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We give you thanks for who you are.

We give you thanks for bringing us together with you.

We give you thanks that through your Son, Jesus Christ, you have opened wide the gates of your kingdom to each one of us.

We give you thanks for your Holy Spirit, who has adopted us into your family.

And we praise you for the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who was offered for us and has taken away the sin of the world.

By his death he has destroyed death; and his rising to life has restored eternal life to us.

We worship you God.

Amen.