

Taking Another Look ... at Rest

by Donna Pyle

*He leadeth
me beside
the still waters.
He restoreth
my soul.*

Psalm 23:2b–3a KJV

When was the last time you rested? *Actually* rested where you spent a significant portion of time — or even a whole day — unplugged from technology, your calendar, and your to-do list?

To breathe.

To stroll in God’s beautiful creation, with only the sun’s position as your clock.

To savor Scripture and allow God to nourish your soul.

To pray and be still long enough to hear God’s gentle whispers.

We live in a culture that tempts and baits us into living life at an unsustainable clip. That pace robs us emotionally, physically, relationally, and spiritually. We tend to wear busyness as a badge of courage and look down on those who choose not to keep up.

The importance of rest was one of the first things God communicated to us through Scripture. He created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh. (Genesis 2:2; Exodus 20:11) Not because He needed to rest but to model a behavior we need to adopt to survive — literally. Rest wasn’t suggested by God; it was commanded. (Exodus 23:12)

So why have we neglected — or worse, denied — the importance of rest? Perhaps somewhere deep down we believe that if we don’t keep up, we become less influential. Even irrelevant.

The kingdom doesn’t need our leftover scraps of love, distracted concern, and surface conversation. The kingdom needs replenished, energized, and passionate disciples — Jesus’ followers who aren’t too tired to see the real needs of others or notice the hurting individual in a crowd.

Burnout isn’t spiritual, yet we run toward it at full throttle.

We are a generation of exhausted people.

A pastor once said, “The pace at which we do the work of God is killing the work of God in us.” Do we really want to model that example for the next generation?

I find it interesting that Psalm 23:2 (KJV) tells us that God *maketh me to lie down in green pastures*. Do we sometimes go down kicking because our self-imposed checklists take precedence over rest? Eventually we will go down — whether by exhaustion or surrender. There’s no neutrality. We either suffer the consequences of our busyness or reap the benefits of rest.

I pray that our lives reflect a desire for God to weave this soul-deep rest into our daily routine: *He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul* (Psalm 23:2b–3a KJV).

What does rest look like for you? **Q**