

## *Smoky Mountain Reflections #173*

What are you doing as a part of your daily, weekly, or monthly routine to enrich your biblical knowledge and application of that truth to your life? Take a moment for a quick inventory; how much time do you spend with God in prayer, worship and study of his truth? Now compare that with the amount of time you spend sleeping (which is very important, and should be ~8 hours a day) and working for pay or in some other way as part of your God-given vocation (a good balance would be 40-50 hours per week). After you subtract all the other things you do during your day (primping, eating, playing, and relaxing), how much time is left?

If you give to God a minimum of one hour a week in worship so he can give you his word and sacrament in the way he established, then you are already ahead of over 80% of our nation's population. That one hour is so nurturing and beneficial that if that is all you do, you are already well equipped to face the week. Scripture does say, though, to remember the Sabbath **DAY** and make it holy. The last thing God created was a day of rest, and setting a good example for us all, the creator of the universe RESTED for a day. So resting and communing with God and his saints on a weekly basis is very important. But is it enough?

I would like to suggest that a well-balanced life has a good mix of many God-pleasing practices which take care of our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Interestingly enough, while spiritual health is the most important (eternally speaking), it requires perhaps the smallest amount of your time, and provides the greatest good. For example, "prayer without ceasing" does not mean 24/7 active prayer, it means taking whatever time is required a few times a day to pray about the things going on in your life and the people that are important to you, and in between those prayers, do all that you are doing for God and make the most of the time, skills, and resources he has given you, so that what you do to the Glory of God will be the first and best you can give to him.

Here at Saint Paul, we want to make sure we do our best as your family in Christ to help you make the most of every moment that feeds your spiritual well-being. We have 3 divine worship opportunities each week, and your newsletter and announcements tell you what text will be preached on at those services so you can study them ahead of time; this will enrich your worship experience! You also have 3 adult bible study times to choose from, not to mention the mountain of written materials in our narthex designed to answer just about any question you might have on current events, issues of faith, and congregational activities and schedules. We also have many resources available online. You can receive the newsletter electronically in color, our website and Facebook page have current sermons for you to watch or listen to, not to mention other video, audio, and written information available there.

I hope you survive the summer heat this year, and I also hope you make full use of the resources available to you, and as your pastor, let me assure you that I am never too busy for or bothered by questions of faith or scripture, but the 5 minutes preceding worship are usually pretty full. ☺

Blessings,  
Pastor Portier