

RE-CREATE RHYTHM 1: Why does it Matter?

WE ARE MADE FOR AND COMMANDED TO REST

As we seek to develop our own Rule of life within the CROWN framework we don't need to follow a specific order, in many ways the different patterns all re-inforce each other. Depending on our present situation some aspects might prove more natural to adopt than others; however, the Re-Create rhythm, *of valuing regular life giving rest*, definitely sets us against the flow of our present restless culture. It may expose where we also misplace our trust as we begin to confront why we are unable to stop and rest.

So shall we start at the beginning. *Literally*. Rewind to Genesis, the sixth day. Humanity is created, male and female in God's image, the height of creation - God says it is Very Good. What happens next? What is the first thing that people did as newly created beings? Rest!

They joined God in the seventh day, as he "blessed the seventh day and made it Holy, because he rested from all the work of creating that he had done." The first action of humanity was *inaction*, rather, a resting with God from which they would then work the garden. It was Mike Breen that summarised this succinctly: *We work from rest, rather than rest from work*.

Over time that rhythm or pattern may become so distorted in our lives we simply survive the week to get to the weekend. Worse still, we hang on and hang on for holiday - and then by the time we get there, we're so tired, that as soon as we stop we're sick.

This is where, once again, we are amazed by the sheer wisdom of God made manifest in the Bible. In those few words from Genesis we see that sabbath is a time that is *different*, it is *set apart*, made Holy by God. Sabbath is an opportunity, an invitation, to share in God's holiness: to reflect this, in terms of CROWN, we have chose to express this as a rhythm of *re-creation* rather than *rest* quite deliberately. To be re-created, means we invite God into our rest in order to allow him to renew us.

One thing we often overlook is the seriousness with which God lays out this principle - indeed it is a command, one of the Ten Commandments, ranked alongside, murder, adultery, theft - things that most of us might not even consider. If we look at the Exodus passage verses 8-11 though, we see it is also the only commandment with an explanation of why it is important:

8 *'Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labour and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your*

God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Sabbath brings with it God's blessing. It is a time of intentional drawing closer to him, an opportunity to seek and hear his Word to us, to seek and invite the Holy Spirit afresh into each aspect of our lives.

But more than that, Sabbath brings with it freedom, freedom from anxiety, removing from us the burden to produce and accomplish things. By stepping back from these things which can enslave us, and entrusting them to God - we come to a deeper place of trust, that he is our provider, not us. The recording of the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5 adds further explanation:

15 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

For the Jewish people, sabbath was a matter of identity, it distinguished them from the surrounding cultures, but it also told them their own story. For Christians, we share that heritage, but we have been rescued from the slavery of sin - sabbath is an opportunity to make a statement to ourselves, and those around that we are different that Jesus has set us free.

Writer, Walter Brueggemann provocatively, but helpfully, describes *Sabbath as Resistance*. In his book of the same title he notes the point of Sabbath is not keeping rules, which can dominate our conversations, *can I shop? can I drink? is it OK to flick at work emails? revise for exams?* Instead he argues it is about becoming a whole person and restoring a whole society.

This is a challenge to a 24/7 society of consumption, a society in which we live to achieve, accomplish, perform, and possess. We want more, own more, use more, eat more, and drink more. Keeping the Sabbath allows us to break this restless cycle and focus on what is truly important.

This idea of resistance is expressed at St Mike's in the statement - *We refuse to run at the pace of the world.*

Tim Keller writes, “The purpose of Sabbath is not simply to rejuvenate yourself in order to do more production, nor is it the pursuit of pleasure. The purpose of Sabbath is to enjoy your God, life in general, what you have accomplished in the world through his help, and the freedom you have in the gospel—the freedom from slavery to any material object or human expectation.”

Now that sounds much bigger than what I’ve heard during much of my Christian journey which often boils down to this, *is it OK to go to Sainsbury’s and do my shopping on a Sunday?*

Now - if that’s where we’re at, I want to suggest that our vision for rest is pitifully small. Allow the Re-Create rhythm to blow your mind at the beauty of what God offers.

So let me ask you -

On a continuum of Fully Rested to Always Restless, where would you place yourself?

Think about that, talk to those around you, or leave you comments below... and we’ll continue in a moment.

RE-CREATE RHYTHM

2: Building Good Rhythms

As we continue to think about the Re-Create aspect of the CROWN rule of life I want to highlight the importance rhythm and routine when it comes to finding rest. We'll then develop further what we might bring into the space we create, but be convinced for this, as we make space for the LORD he will fill it.

The good news is that we have a divine invitation from Jesus to rest:

Matthew 11:25-30 (NIV) ²⁸ 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'

Jesus invites us to come to him, and as we do, he promises us rest. But he also teaches us how to find it within these verses is a sense of method too - The Message translation is extremely helpful here:

Matthew 11:28-30 The Message (MSG)

28-30 "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

Finding rhythms of rest and re-creation is something we do in partnership with Jesus. ***He says, come to me, get away with me to recover life.***

When come to him, he helps us step back from the onslaught, we get away from the relentless drive of the world and he teaches us patterns that will bring us life.

It's what he did, in his life ministry Jesus models rest and balance. When we would work harder, Jesus counterintuitively seems to free-wheel... As a church, St Mike's spent a whole year going through Mark's gospel - it was quite some undertaking, but as we did things we hadn't noticed before began to sand out.

In moments of great revival, when the crowds were so great that the Disciples couldn't find space even to eat (Mark 6:31), or when they were swept away by the enthusiasm and expected Jesus to busy himself with ministry (Mark 1:35-39), time and again Jesus seeks time and space to rest with God and to

pray. More than that, he seeks to lead his disciples to share in space and refreshment.

He always made sure that he had the essential building blocks in place first..... *Early in the morning he got up and went to a solitary place to pray....*

So when we think about rhythms of re-creation - we come to Jesus knowing he's done this. To this Jesus says Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. *Take on my yoke - for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* But what does that mean?

It's an invitation to partnership... Jesus says come and share in my business. The yoke is an agricultural image, it bound two oxen together as they pulled a plough. It's an image used elsewhere for being joined together - whether in marriage, or business.

Mike Breen relays interestingly, that it was often the case a young inexperienced Ox would be yoked with a more mature one... The wiser animal would keep the pace steady and they'd last the day. Jesus says come, joined to me, just do what I do... If I'm not doing it - stop.

We're to watch how he does it and copy - to soak in the patterns we see him live in the gospels, and work with him - in partnership through our day. Put another way, if Jesus ran your schedule, how different would your week look, how would he go about your job? If you were tied to him, where would be taking you tomorrow?

*The Message translation encourages to - **learn the unforced rhythms of grace.*** Jesus' rhythms weren't built on trying harder, nor so rigid they were brittle, but the important things always took priority.

Well you may say, this all sounds good in theory - but my life is crazy, I don't know where to start to begin.

St Michael's Church building here is not the biggest in the world. For many years we let out our church centre and the storage with it - this had the knock on effect of clutter - everywhere. A small upper room which could have been used as a quiet space for prayer became so full there was no space to move. As much as we tried the space just filled and filled again.

When we made the sacrifice of rent, but recovered the space, it was transformed.

But Is the room of your life too cluttered and confused to find space?

We can fill our lives with too many things and tinker around the edges without resolving the bigger issues. Choosing to rest and building rhythms around it leads us to a better place.

Rick Warren speaks of three key rhythms for rest:

Draw-back Daily - time to pray, reflect, give thanks

Withdraw Weekly - take sabbath, re-creation

Abandon Annually - get a break, a holiday.

How we actually spend our time ultimately shows what our real priorities are.

Does your life reflect the unforced rhythms of Grace, or are you still in slavery?

Let me ask you -

What priority does rest and Sabbath have in the routines of your life at the moment?

Think about that, talk to those around you, or leave you comments below... and we'll continue in a moment.

RE-CREATE RHYTHM

3: Stopping

As we've introduced the Re-Create aspect of the CROWN rule we've noted both the significance of rest - that we're wired for it - and how God commands it for our good - as Jesus said, *The Sabbath was made for man*. If we are to be serious about this then need to form good rhythms to enable it.

In creation we sabbath is one of a series of boundaries spaces, set apart, just as God separates day from night. It is separate, different, and a protected space. Likewise, we need to create boundaries to make the one day of Sabbath a day set apart, devoted, meaningful and distinct from the other six.

We'll explore more of what that means in terms of rest, renewal and celebration in the next talks, but let's remind us of what we gain by not stopping - not much - as Psalm 127 notes.

1 Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain.

Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.

2 In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat – for he grants sleep to those he loves.

The Psalm says much more than if God's in the plan it'll work. It's all about whose work it is anyway. How often does our self-sufficiency kick in, we problem solve and sort things out ourselves - the answer is just to work harder. Living like this gives no space for God to do something greater.

Interestingly, research increasingly demonstrates that God's ways are best. Compulsion to check our emails constantly - smart phone addiction, availability 24/7 is making us less productive. So much so that some governments are considering legislation to provide boundary between work and home life.

But whilst activity can make us feel important it is not faithfulness.

The Psalm suggests that our closeness to God is better measured by finding rest in a restless world. **1 John 3:19** speaks of hearts set "at rest in his presence." To get to this we need to learn to stop.

In ceasing our anxious toil, we declare that we are not in control that we are not the answer, instead we demonstrate a trust and reliance on God that he is. Sabbath is a regular reminder of this reality and truth.

In a recent blog, Author J D Greear describes sabbath *as a pill to take to remind yourself that you are not God; to remind you that you do not bear the strain of providing and taking care of . . . you! God does! The more we remember that these sabbaths are gifts and privileges, not duties, the more they will lead us to rest in Christ.*

God has promised to multiply our efforts over six days to the seven.

As a vicar, I have always been pretty disciplined about taking a “day-off”, but on reflection it has not always been sabbath. Often, it has just been a day when I have been busy with tasks related to work at home, or for the family and not actively made space for re-creation. Now, we make sure that the housework is done before sabbath, so we can enjoy rest.

Sabbath then is distinct, space carved out to be different - we need to create times of and for it, and prepare for it. Marking a beginning and end helps create space that we can fill with good things, Some find the more Jewish pattern of evening to evening the most helpful, meaning you start the next day fresh, others setting apart of a whole calendar day is most practical.

So what do we stop? Work might be the obvious statement; with that we surrender Self importance, Security, Identity, Busyness and the Lure of money. In fact stopping any activity that gives a sense of achievement - means we step back from being defined by what we do, to remember that we're accepted purely by grace.

We might also want to keep out the lure of the world. Choosing not to shop is to say we're not defined by what we have or get - satisfaction isn't found in consumerism.

We may want to lay down technology too - rest is not just to be passively entertained but to actively embrace the opportunity that space provides to deepen our relationships with others and with God. Maybe you could switch email off, phones off, closing off the things that would draw us back in to a whirl of activity and anxiety. Do you dare try that?

Often, in my experience the sabbath conversation ended there. It was all about what we didn't or couldn't do do. But God purposes something better - he fills the space we make.

We'll explore in our next talks the gifts he offers to us but sabbath isn't just creating space so we can be run ragged for the rest of the week. It teaches us to build in slack and have boundaries in the day to day.

I've found back to back meetings utterly exhausting. A little margin can help give 'head-space' and 'prayer-space.' Does your diary have margin?

A culture of rest will take time to build. It may be baby steps at first - and we may find other routines need to adjust to make space and we'll be learning as we go. If a special meal means you run around all day preparing, then it won't be rest.

But all of this starts when we choose to STOP. But as we do, be confident of this, as we make space for the LORD - he *will* fill it.

Let me ask you -

Do you find it hard to stop? How do you think a regular pattern might help you do that?

Think about that, talk to those around you, or leave you comments below... and we'll continue in a moment.

RE-CREATE RHYTHM

4: Resting

As we build Re-Creation into our rule of life we're going to look now at what it means to rest. You may think stopping is the same but I would suggest you that it is possible to stop but not rest. Anyone whose head is spinning with the stresses they carry will identify with that.

Many times, our restlessness comes from the myth that we need to hold everything together. To rest is itself a statement of faith - we are believing that God is in control. If we exhaust ourselves we risk becoming exhausted, bitter, cynical or joyless. Rest then, can be physical, but it is also a state of mind - not constantly carrying burden and stress and being able to switch off.

After all Jesus said *do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.*

True rest is an expression of trust in God. I love the way that in the wilderness the Israelites were provided with manna, the food they needed day by day. They couldn't store it - it was a daily reliance on God. The only time this changed was at the Sabbath - then they could collect double the day before in order to rest with all they needed.

Our inability to rest though, can begin to expose the idols we have - where our trust truly lies. There's a fascinating passage in Isaiah 30, where we read these words, *This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: "Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength. **But you would have none of it.***

This is a prophetic denunciation of Israel making an alliance with Egypt to defend themselves against Assyria the superpower of the day. They had been warned against this - but rather than resting and trusting in God, instead they had busied themselves with their own plan. The passage continues with promises of blessing and restoration as they lay down their trust in false idols.

In repentance and rest - But you would have none of it... Do we prefer to trust other things rather than take the invitation to rest in God? Do you know the anxieties that drive you? Maybe the need to succeed? or the need to be liked? What blessing are we missing?

Do we need to learn again that if we take a day off do we trust that the things won't fall apart in our work, our studies or wherever we have responsibilities?

It's like the story of the lumberjack who starts his new job - he has a great first day cuts down more trees than anyone, but as the week goes on, however hard he tries - he can't keep up with the others.

By Thursday he's sacked - and he says to the foreman - I don't know what's going on - I've worked so hard.

And his boss says this: "Have you stopped to sharpen your axe?"

The young man replied: "*No sir. I have been working too hard to take time for that.*"

So, how do we do this? In Psalm 130, the writer describes an intentionality - a deliberate step to do this, verse 2: *But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me.*

Sabbath rest is holistic, there is an interconnectedness between Spirit, Soul and Body. How we care for our bodies, whether we exercise, how we eat are important factors in whether we can switch off. I know, for example, any caffeine after 6pm leaves me at risk of being awake into the early hours, which can have a knock on effect for several days.

Sleep is an important factor to be protected. For Wesley it was a key diagnostic of Spiritual health, lack of it suggested striving or the risk of falling prey to temptation. Sometimes I just need to go to bed early to bring things back into balance.

Similarly, exercising can have a positive impact on our well-being and our overall energy levels. If our work isn't physically demanding then we may find exercise helps us switch off and find mental rest.

But it is good to know what refreshes us. What helps us switch off from the relentless encroaching of the world? We have permission to play, be with friends, take a nap, go for a walk, listen to music. read a book For me, it's a walk or watching aeroplanes - yes both are part of my rule...

As we switch off to the drive of the world, we switch on more deeply to God. Resting from our self-effort also reminds us of GRACE - nothing to prove - because he has exchanged his righteousness for our sin.

This idea of switching on to other thing was wonderfully illustrated this, by a recent TV ad for a holiday company. Everything is played in slow-motion, to

savour the rest and beauty of the location - the pool, the sunshine. Our sabbath rhythms should see us slow down, when we do, we notice more, appreciate the small things, we pick out the details, we invest in our relationships, we're more present to those around us.

As you bring rest into your rule of life, for patterns that help you switch off, and switch on to God. mark it in some way.

BUT YOU would have none of it.... Let's not make the same mistake, but use this rhythm to confront the restless world we're in with something better.

So let me ask you -

Are you working with a blunt axe?

Think about that, talk to those around you, or leave you comments below... and we'll continue in a moment.

RE-CREATE RHYTHM

5: Renewal

As we continue to develop the components of a Re-Create rhythm, it's important to note that rest and sabbath is more than self-indulgent leisure.

Imagine yourself, if you will, an Israelite, a poor family making bricks as part of forced labour for the mighty Egyptian empire. A foreigner, a nobody.

Then in your day, your cries are heard, God raises up a leader called Moses, and you see God perform astonishing powerful signs and wonders.

You would have a mixture of awe and fear of a God who passed over your house because of the blood of a lamb and yet takes the first-born of every Egyptian household.

And then you walk on dry ground through the Red Sea to a new life, and see the Egyptian army pursuing you all destroyed. It would be like a dream...

And as God makes a covenant with you as a people - one of the commandments is to only work 6 days a week. What Really? To take a whole day - as a Sabbath to the LORD?

What would you think? Yes please! It would be a duty of delight for sure. You'd fully get what it means that **Sabbath is a gift**. More than that, we realise that God doesn't want to use us but enjoy us. He delights in us and wants us to delight in him.

So what does it mean to have a Sabbath unto the LORD?

Freed from duties, diary appointments, housework, emails or normal 'must-get-done' routines of the other days of the week, we have time to savour each moment – to spend more time noticing the beauty around us, to practise thankfulness... Most of all we have time to attend to God in an unhurried and more focused way.

A time of worship and praise and thanksgiving to God – ideally in a gathered time of worship with the church family, or if your Sabbath is on a different day, a pattern of your own - enjoying Scripture, listening to songs and hymns focusing on God's goodness and love and faithfulness is at the heart of this.

To do this allows us to be renewed in our identity.

Sabbath unto the LORD reminds us we were made for intimacy with God.

Rest brings us back to Genesis, the very beginning, before the fall, before sin, back to the day He made holy in the beginning.

God's created people to walk in rhythm with him their Holy God with a day set apart each week. Time and space to put God first in their lives and enjoy Him.

This was the rhythm since the beginning, and God invites us back into this rhythm. Commands us back. He commands us too.

Remembering we are not God, that we are creatures blessed by God and made in his image gives us true perspective.

A Sabbath unto the LORD reminds us that we are loved and saved.

His love reminds us we have nothing to prove, and we can rest satisfied.

Putting our activity aside, and learning to stop and rest reminds us that nothing we do, can earn God's love it's a gift. His love for us is unconditional and complete and has nothing to do with our efforts.

We come freed to worship, as the bishop of Coventry puts it, to celebrate salvation!

A Sabbath unto the LORD reminds us of his good purposes.

Encountering God in worship brings perspective. We are seated with him in heavenly places and though are problems don't disappear, we see beyond them and are strengthened through them.

We're also reminded of the hope we have - and of God's purposes for the healing of creation. Hebrews 4 describes this in terms of Sabbath rest too - urging us to persevere so that we can anticipate the day when we'll experience the fulness of the coming Kingdom.

If Sabbath is a picture of heaven, each week we have the invitation and opportunity for a foretaste, to be renewed in God's presence. Don't duplicate the busyness of the week into over-busyness with our rest in church - it won't fool Jesus.

A Re-Create rhythm then positions us to be renewed by God as we make ourselves present to rest in him.

We'll continue to explore these blessings as we consider the place of celebration in our rhythms.

So let me ask you -

How do your present patterns of rest lead you into renewal with God?

Think about that, talk to those around you, or leave you comments below... and we'll continue in a moment.

RE-CREATE RHYTHM

6: Celebration

Those of you of a certain generation will recall the music of The Smiths - they divided opinion - but I thought they were great. When they split Morrissey's first solo album, included the song, *Every day is like Sunday*

Do any of you remember that?

The image was of a post nuclear world - where devastation was all around but a small coastal town survived. All that was left for them was the dreary misery that *Every day was like Sunday...*

It was always cloudy and gray.

Well - I wonder fast forwarding to today - when Sunday is less and less distinct, by and large like any other day - if we are any better off. Well key indicators would say not.

But here's the thing - for the Jew - sabbath was always the high point. The Bride it was called or the jewel. Into sabbath was the chance to mark it with special things, with celebration.

I would say if our time set aside to rest feels miserable we're doing it wrong!

Psalm 23 always interests me - whilst not explicitly about sabbath we certainly see that if we let God lead us - he's our shepherd he will take us to still waters and restore our souls.

But as it continues there is a remarkable picture of abundance.

YOU PREPARE A TABLE BEFORE ME IN THE PRESENCE OF MY ENEMIES."

There are enemies all around; earthly and heavenly. But God is such a powerful God, He can set out a lavish banquet for His children right in front of them, and there's nothing they can do about it. That's the measure of God's provision and His protection!

"YOU ANOINT MY HEAD WITH OIL; MY CUP OVERFLOWS."

- The anointing of our head with oil is a sign of God's favour. Favoured guests had fragrant anointing oil placed on their heads

- Not only that, but the cup of their rejoicing never stops running over! God's blessings overtake us again and again and again. We live in a state of continual blessing. Which flows over to others.

Sabbath then isn't about what we stop doing - it is about what we get to do.

We've already seen in the renewal principle that worship is part of that. But stopping and resting we are also acknowledging , the world won't fall apart with out us.

We are showing that God has our needs in his hands we trust that he knows what is he doing.

Sabbath requires surrender on our part – surrender of the things we think are important in our lives and letting God show us his priorities. It is about putting God in control

BUT when we make that space - God would bless us abundantly...

The pattern of the rest of the day might then shaped around those things that help us to slow down; to enjoy God's creation on a walk, cycle-ride, be in the garden, to have unhurried times with friends or family giving time for proper conversation, listening and sharing. To explore our creative gifts that perhaps are not possible to do in the week. To read, to play music – to be time rich rather than time constrained and hurried and all of this in the context of thankfulness for his good gifts to us.

Celebration might mean

- good food
- good company
- good wine - save the best bottle!

What brings gladness to your heart.

So let me ask you -

In what way is rest a joy to you?

Think about that, talk to those around you, or leave you comments below... and we'll continue in a moment.

RE-CREATE RHYTHM

7: Summing Up

What would you do with a completely free half hour? half a morning, half a day? The reality is that God in his wisdom has gifted us a free day in every seven.

The patterns of the CROWN Re-Create rhythm help us engage with that day and make the most of what God intended for us. This sets us against the flow of our 24/7 culture, the fact is we don't even have to live 24/6. Patterns of rest flow from the sabbath and can form part of our day to day.

In failing to stop and taking the rest that was made for us, and we are commanded to:

We lose sight of who God is and who we really are.

We forget that we are not God

We forget that all glory is to God.

We lose sight that we needed rescue and God came for us.

We fall for the deceitfulness of self important and self worship.

We try to be the ones in control.

True rest It gives us the chance to draw breath and look at our lives from a different viewpoint. We are renewed in God's goodness, by the joys of life that bring gladness and we are strengthened to live our life well.

It is said that the sabbath helped maintain the Jewish identity when the nation was exiled in Babylon, refusing to live at the pace of the world will hint to others at something they long for. More than that research says we will become healthier, a day of rest reduces stress, boosts our immune system, increases life expectancy, helps creativity - improves memory. This itself will be a witness to a frantic world.

Blaise Pascal once noted, busyness sends more people to hell than unbelief. It is certainly true that I have spent time with many people who have an interest in Jesus and faith, but the relentless pace of their life mean they never quite get round to taking things further... How good to be able to show it can be different, better!

By learning to stop and by creating good boundaries we make space for God's blessing. By refusing to worry about tomorrow, we begin to relax our grip on the things that dominate our thinking and give them to God to take hold of. In learning to rest we lay down our burdens demonstrating a trust that God has all this in hand.

In seeking God and making that a priority we bring his renewing power into our rest, and in making this day as special in celebration we create a high point in our weeks that we can look to and long for, knowing that blessing awaits.

STOPPING, RESTING, RENEWAL AND CELEBRATION all help us form a life-giving Re-Create rhythm.

So, to make sure we find true rest, what might need to die in us?

To fully rest, we won't just need to surrender to activity, but also the motivation behind it?

An inability to stop may reveal our fears, fears over provision, fears over our career, fears over failure, fears of how we look to others.

We really begin to lay these down when we choose to stop and rest. As we do, we are both acknowledging God is in control but also setting aside idols to worship the one true God who will bless us.

This blessing of true rest is the promise of regular sabbath. Jesus said it was made for man - it's a gift. Sabbath should feel like sailing, rather than striving. Perhaps breakthrough is when our regular rest day becomes the high point of our week. When we enter the week refreshed and with fresh vision.

But that will be discovered step by step. It may take time and unpicking of other patterns to make that space - but it is a worthwhile investment.

A Re-Create rhythm leads us into God's rest. As we learn to lay down our busyness and burdens by stopping, we position ourselves to be renewed finding life and joy as we celebrate God's goodness and his many gifts to us.

Will you choose to go against the flow. Will you Stop, Rest, Celebrate and in all of this weekly, daily enjoy the renewing goodness of Father God?

As we close, shall we pray?

Father God, thank you that you invite us to rest with you. Forgive us for how our failure to do this reflects our lack of trust and our pursuit of lesser things. Would you teach us to stop, to rest, to celebrate and be renewed in the time you have set apart for us. As we do, may we rise

**with your strength to witness to the world and shine out your goodness.
In Jesus Name - Amen.**