

Small Group Resource

Rhythms of Grace

Note to Leaders:

1. **Watch Video Clip:** Rhythms of Grace [12mins]
2. Below is a summary of video clip to aid you in leading the session. Once you've watched the video clip as a group you can skip straight to the **Discussion Questions** at the end of this resource.

Rhythms of Grace

Living life to the full doesn't mean a crammed diary! Jesus was the most effective person in kingdom ministry and He modelled a pattern of busyness and rest.

We can learn about his intention for us in this passage...

Matthew 11:28-30 (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."

➤ Jesus' schedule breathed

We can watch how Jesus does it in the gospels. The rhythm of work and rest is perfectly modelled. There were periods of intensity and periods of withdrawal. There are numerous examples of this in the gospels. Even when he was most in demand he wasn't pressured by other people's agendas and really did live freely and lightly.

Ephesians 2:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would **walk in them.**"

➤ God has prepared good works specifically for me to walk in / live out.

We are God's handywork. We are resourced for the work that God has specifically prepared for us uniquely to do.



➤ **We are saved by grace not our good works.**

We can add nothing to the work that Jesus has already done on the cross. We are not saved by our works but saved 'unto' good works. However, if we are following Jesus it will change our lives and we will want to co-operate in becoming more like Jesus in the way we live.

➤ **We are all called to do the works God has prepared for us in advance. But we need to build this into a healthy rhythm of life.**

Work and rest need to be balanced.

➤ **The Sabbath is a commandment.**

Exodus 20:8-9 (NASB)

⁸"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God..."

➤ **"Life is a marathon not a sprint"**

John Wright recalls a time when John Munford challenged him saying "Life is a marathon not a sprint and if you're going to be functioning for the long haul you've got to get this sorted out".

➤ **Rest was made to benefit man as part of a healthy rhythm of life.**

Mark 2:27 (ESV)

²⁷And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath".

➤ **Instead of thinking of work and rest as opposites, we need to think of them as partners.** (Recommended Book - 'REST' by Alex Soojung-Kim Pang)

The book's tagline is "Why you get more done when you work less"

➤ **Research shows that without a healthy rhythm workers can become less productive.**

We have more work-saving devices than ever, but actually we don't work less. We possibly actually work even more because we just cram more into our lives because we can.

The devices & technology we have to save us time start to blur the line between work and rest. How many of us have a device with us at all times and check it last thing at night and first thing in the morning?



“Rest [has] never been something you do when you have finished everything else. If you want rest, you have to take it. You have to resist the lure of busyness, make time for rest, take it seriously, and protect it from a world that is intent on stealing it.” Alex Pang

➤ **Developing a healthy rhythm of life is easier for some than others**

In different seasons of life but we need to find some ways of building this principle into our lives because our bodies are not designed to keep going without stopping.

➤ **Life’s Instruction Manual**

John uses his new motorbike’s manufacturer manual as an example. He notes that if he follows the maintenance schedule that is outlined inside the manual the bike will run at peak performance for the duration of its life.

Likewise – The Bible is made by our manufacturer – the one who made us! **The Sabbath is not just as a commandment but it’s an instruction given to us so that we can have a flourishing life!**

➤ **The maintenance schedule of the Sabbath includes:**

- Rest physically
- Replenish emotionally
- Recharge spirituality

This will enable us to run at peak performance in our lives for the duration. With a healthy rhythm in life we will benefit physically, emotionally, spiritually.

➤ **Some top tips...**

- **Get alone.** Include time for quietness (our world is full of noise) find some unhurried relaxing time. Walk, sit by lake, read, have a bath etc.
- **Include time for relationships** – invest in marriages, family and friendships (in and outside the church).
- **Refocus spiritually** – get spiritually replenished. Not just on the ‘day off’ but during the week as well. Spend time re-centring with Jesus.

Without rest and replenishment and time to refocus spiritually, it’s easy for us to start to define ourselves by what we ‘do’. We need to remember as we said at the start – we are not saved by our works, our salvation is in Jesus alone and what He has done. Our identity is in Him NOT the works, we are a child of God. Our jobs, our parenting responsibilities, our serving etc. do not define us.



Discussion Questions...

Alex Pang suggests we need to think of work and rest as partners if we are going to develop a healthy rhythm of life.

Have a think about the relationship between 'work' and 'rest' in your own life...

- **Would you say that there a partnership between work and rest in your life (a healthy rhythm) or is it more an either/or?**

Here are some questions to help you reflect...

- 1. Are you doing the 'good works he has prepared for you to do' ?**

As we move into three Sunday services, how can you play your part? We are all needed, we all have a unique part to play – what is yours? What is God saying? *(Note: If you wish to look at this further the 2019 'Needed' Small Group Resource is recommended)*

- 2. Do you feel like you are doing too much?**

Are you perhaps doing the works that are someone else's to do? Why do you think this is? What is God saying?

- 3. Do you have periods of time where you can incorporate into your rhythm of life the three areas mentioned as part of God's maintenance schedule (Sabbath)?**

- Rest physically
- Replenished emotionally
- Recharged spirituality

- 4. What are your hurdles to developing a healthy rhythm of life in this season? In your stage of life?**

- 5. What's one next step you could take?**

This resource is based on 3 talks from John Wright that can be found online here:

<https://www.vineyardchurches.org.uk/resources/leading-from-a-place-of-rest/>
<https://trentvineyard.org/talks/making-room-for-more-rest>
<https://trentvineyard.org/talks/good-works>

