

# SAID ED June 23, 2013

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With this weekend with school over many members of our community begin taking summer vacations. Some folks have already moved into summer residences. Summer is a great time to pull back, change the pace of our lives; and break from the routine that normally leads us through the course of the week. It's a great time to find some moments for relaxation, for the savoring the warmth of the day and just being with family and friends.

Summer vacation is to the year what Sunday ought to be to the week: a time to withdraw from normal activity and to realize that all of life is a gift of God. We are indeed stewards of creation, and the Lord expects us to be mindful of God's presence in our lives. Everything we have and are is a gift from God. Enjoy your vacation this year and remember to thank the Lord for this time of rest.

Sadly, our culture is losing the value of the "withdrawing and relaxing" from regular activity. Our scriptural tradition speaks about the Sabbath day, the Lord's Day, the day of rest. The translation of the word "Sabbath" is properly rendered: "withdrawing." We "withdraw" from the normal work-a-day world to celebrate our relationship to God and one another and with God's creation. Giving ourselves "space" and a break from our normal routines allows us to reflect upon God's desire for a relationship with us. So often we find ourselves so busy caring on the duties of daily life that we can lose focus. We forget why we're doing these things in the first place. God gave us the Sabbath so that we would always have one day of our week to remember who we are and where we have come from and why we are upon this earth.

It's a shame that our Sabbath is being gobbled up by galloping commercialism. Summer vacation may be the last vestige that we have of what it means to relax, withdraw, and allow God to refresh us. I urge you to see your vacation this summer as a kind of Sabbath, a special period of allowing yourself to let go of the urgencies that so often flood our minds and hearts; of the busyness that crowds our activities and keeps us at times from even remembering why we are so active and so busy in the first place.

I hope your summer vacation will be a good time of rest and relaxation for you and for your family. I also invite you to think about how you spend your Sabbath every week. What are we losing by not taking a day of rest every week? God wants us to have the space and the time to relax; to rest in the divine love and mercy, to cuddle up in God's lap as a child might do with its parent, knowing that the weight of the world is not really on our backs, even though at times it feels like it, to be secure in the knowledge that this is God's world, that, if we do our small part, God will do the rest.

Enjoy your vacation wherever it takes you and listen to your heart and what it might be telling you about how much God loves you. I promise to do the same. Perhaps we can compare notes when we all get back.

Have a good week

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