

***“God blessed the seventh day and made it special  
because on that day he rested from his work”***

In most Christian Churches we recognize Sunday as that day of rest. When I was growing up that meant we went to church as long as everyone was feeling well; there were Sundays that some people stayed home. However when ball season began and there were Sunday sports days our church became the ball diamonds. I am not sure how much rest that was but it was different and as the saying goes sometimes a change is as good as rest. So I am not surprised over my years of ministry that the pews are often empty on Sunday mornings as people are doing something different; some are following a sports team, some are at the lake, some are on family vacations and some are just taking a break. The concern I sometimes think about is this time of change seems to get longer each year and or also includes a change in the winter months as well. This means that it is difficult to plan special Sundays or events over the summer and even sometimes in the winter. It also means that church finances can fluctuate along with attendance. This has become the reality of many churches and the culture in which we exist.

So I am pondering the question of what does attending church do for people? I most often hear that it is a time of rest and inspiration for the coming week. Some folks have told me that going to church means their week gets off to a good start and if they miss church they don't have a good week. Sometimes when I am in traffic or standing in line at the store there are many people who are not having a good day or maybe week and I am tempted to ask if they went to church on Sunday but we are suppose to keep religion out of the public realm.

However I would like you to take a moment and think about the state of the world today. There are break ins, vandalism, violence, drug addictions, home invasions, gangs, abductions, human trafficking and the list goes on. How did our society get so top heavy on activities that deplete pleasure in life rather than nurture life? I would like to suggest it happens when we forget that God created the world and all that's in it and when we lose our connection to God we forget how to respect what God has created and we forget to respect ourselves, each other and what belongs to other people. Worship is not just about gearing up for the next week it is about living in a way that is pleasing to God and nurturing to us. When we fail to nurture our faith life with praise and worship it affects all our life just as forgetting to take our medications can cause an overall feeling of poor health; failing to nurture our faith can lead to a break down in living in a good way and respecting what has been given to us.

I have also heard that going to church is a habit. That habit for many was broken during the pandemic. So I would like to plant this seed as you are taking a rest or having a change of routine over the summer think about what you plan for September. Will returning to regular Sunday worship and doing regular weekly maintenance of your faith become part of taking care of your over all health and the health of the world. After all God asked us to take good care of the world and all that's in it including us.

Blessings from the desk of Rev. Jo-Ann Hills