

## Pray

We are continuing to look at Emotionally Healthy Spirituality  
About having a healthy **spiritual relationship with God**  
And having **healthy emotional relationships with each other**

And I want to start today with **Matthew 11.28-30** where Jesus says  
<sup>28</sup> **'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.**

And I believe this

The burden which Jesus wants us to carry is made to measure  
It is designed to fit who we are and so it is **easy** to carry  
The trouble is that very often we take on more than we should  
Or worse still other people ask us to carry more than we should

## So HOW?

**HOW do we find the rhythm of grace?** - which allows us to flourish

For me it usually comes back to the horizontal 8 –  
**Where one circle is our time with God** – where we are regenerated  
A bit like Mary - sitting at the feet of Jesus  
+ the other circle is **serving together with others in the world**  
– which is very often tiring  
A bit like Martha - supplying Jesus and his disciples with food and drink

and we all need to **keep these two things in BALANCE**  
**time with God** on one side  
AND **time serving with others** on the other side

and my first point is  
**Let's Keep the Sabbath**

So please turn with me to the creation narrative in Genesis  
and to the seventh day **Genesis 2.1-3 on Pg 4**

**2 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.**

<sup>2</sup> **By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.**

<sup>3</sup> **Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.**

God worked for 6 days + when we work then we are like God  
God rested on the seventh day + so when we rest we are like God  
And the word Sabbath comes from the Hebrew word to stop  
So when we take a Sabbath we **stop working for 24 hours**

So now please can we turn together to the 10 commandments  
To **Exodus 20** which you will find on **page 77**

And the fourth commandment is all about keeping the Sabbath  
Let me read it for us

<sup>8</sup> **'Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labour and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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.**

So just before the commandments  
do not murder and do not commit adultery  
do not steal and do not lie  
comes the commandment **Keep the Sabbath**  
so **how important is it to God that we keep the Sabbath?**  
It is very important - as important as do not murder

And the reason it is so important  
Is because this simple spiritual discipline teaches us to trust God

I am aware that I have said this before

**My Sabbath is Thursday** - And so on Thursday I stop work  
And don't answer the phone and I don't answer email  
And I have a day of rest  
And an amazing thing happens every Friday  
Because every Friday the world is still turning  
And God has managed perfectly well without me

And as a result I have learnt that **God is God and I am not**  
God is all powerful and all loving  
And I can trust him – he is totally reliable  
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Now the Jews have been keeping the Sabbath  
a lot longer than you and me  
and they have a couple of good tricks

#### **Trick No 1**

**The Jewish Day starts at 6.00pm and finishes at 6.00pm**

So they start the day with a good meal and a night's sleep  
And once they are refreshed then they do a day's work  
and for some of us it might work well to start our Sabbath at 6.00pm

#### **Trick No 2**

And the other good trick they have is

**The Jews have a day of preparation before the Sabbath**

A day when they buy the food and clean the house  
And do all of the final preparations  
for their Sabbath day of worship and play

So it might be that you want to make Saturday your preparation day  
When you buy the food and wash the clothes  
And Sunday your Sabbath when there is time for  
eating together and worship and Rest

**my first point is**  
**Lets keep the Sabbath**

**And my second point is**  
**Let's pray the Daily Office**

and let me set the scene by quoting  
Pete Scazzero – Emotionally Healthy Spirituality - pg 155  
READ QUOTE

The daily office is how the monks pray  
St Benedict lived about the year 500  
And Benedictine monks pray 7 times a day  
Because of something they read in the Psalms

So please turn with me to **Psalm 119.164 on page 622**

**Psalm 119** is an acrostic poem

So **verses 161 – 168** all start with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet  
And this stanza they all begin with the letter Shin  
And here in **Verse 164** – David writes  
**Seven times a day I praise you - for your righteous laws.**

But not everyone prayed 7 times a day

So for example Daniel tells us he prayed three times a day

And you will find this in **Daniel 6.10 on page 892 we read**

<sup>10</sup> **Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened towards Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before**

**St Francis** lived about 1200 and he and his followers pray 4 times a day  
They pray just before breakfast and just before lunch  
Just before supper and just before going to bed

And this is the pattern adopted by **the Church of England**

In our morning prayer, Prayer during the day, evening prayer and  
Compline.

But **the purpose is to remember God**

If you like it is a little **like a Mini-Sabbath**

When we remember the presence of God with us

And something I do – to help me remember the presence of God  
Is that **when I put toast in the toaster** I say the Lord prayer

Or another thing I have done in the past

**Is to have a prayer on the cupboard just above the kettle**

So that while I am waiting for the kettle to boil

I am reminded of the presence of God

In away the idea is that praying little and often is good for us

And so in a Benedictine monastery

The services of prime terce, sext, none and compline

are only about 15 minute long

**My second point is**

**Lets pray the Daily Office**

I started with **Matthew 11.28-30 from the NIV**

And I want to finish with **Matthew 11.28-30 from The Message**

<sup>28-30</sup> ***“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.”***

And that is the aim of Emotionally Healthy Spirituality

That we should **discover OUR unforced Rhythms of Grace**

And for me

Both the Sabbath and my daily devotions

Have been crucially important spiritual disciplines

And I hope they become important for you too

**Lets Pray**