



January 13, 2021

Sometimes it is helpful to receive an order to rest and take care of yourself, because otherwise it might feel self-indulgent. For instance, a doctor might give an order not to lift more than five pounds while you recover from an injury, and the order gives permission to take a break from certain kinds of work and chores without feeling guilty.

So here's a prescription during a stressful time.

Take care of yourself.

Take. Care. of. Yourself.

I know that there are plenty of other things that we're supposed to be concerned about: taking care of other people, taking care of work, taking care of our country. There is so much to be concerned about that we could trudge about all day under the weight of responsibility.

But if we are serious about the call to make a difference in the world, then we know that this is not the work of a few days, but of a lifetime. The good work of God is not a sprint (it's not even a marathon), it is a lifetime commitment. We will not be good for anyone if we do not take care of ourselves.

Here are some prescriptions – orders, if you like – that are absolutely not frivolous or secondary to what is “Really Important.” Over-achievers and over-burdened, take heed:

1. **Laughter.** Enjoy a funny book or television show. Call a friend and tell light-hearted stories. Listen to a stand-up comedian and give yourself the space to laugh. It will give you energy for the important work.
2. **Beauty.** Research shows that the experience of beauty correlates with physical health and an impulse to kindness and generosity. Beauty is important, whether you find it in music, nature, the visual arts, or cooking.
3. **Silence.** Some people have more silence than they want, especially during a pandemic, but others of us find too many ways to fill up the silence. Find a place to sit down comfortably, with no agenda except to be still, and notice what your mind and spirit want to work on. A nice walk or hike is good for this too.
4. **Prayer.** You're already there, because steps 1-3 are ways of praying. Prayer takes many forms, so I bet that you are already praying more often than you know. Sometimes it's helpful to use a familiar prayer, like the Lord's Prayer, or a prayer as simple as “Thank you, God.”

The gifts of God are abundant and nourishing.
Open your hands to receive them.

Peace,

Rev. Matthew Wooster
Senior Minister

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