

“An Unhurried Life: Following Jesus’ Rhythms of Work and Rest”

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You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.

I feel hurried inside even when nothing actually urgent is on my schedule. Hurry has become a habit.

Hurry rushes toward the destination and fails to enjoy the journey.

Hurry is a way of life in which advertisers have been mentoring us for years!

Our technological tools translate our inward hurry into outward hurry.

Jesus is inviting me to walk with him. Too often, I find myself running for him. There’s a difference!

Since it’s hard to patiently work with people long enough that they become deeply rooted followers of Jesus, we too often settle for helping them learn more information rather than focusing on the long, hard work of equipping them to follow Jesus.

Emergencies call for a rapid response. I think of biblical stories that illustrate this idea. When God is about to rain down judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot urges his sons-in-law, “Hurry and get out of this place” (Gen 19:14). Joseph, during a great famine, urges his brothers to hurry home to their father and bring him back to Egypt, where they can find food (Gen 45:9). Some of Pharaoh’s officials who begin to believe in the word Moses is speaking on God’s behalf hurry to take their slaves and livestock inside before the plague of hail falls (Ex 9:20). Later, the Egyptians urge the Israelites to leave right away before the plagues kill the entire nation (Ex 12:33). Moses urges Aaron to hurry and make an atonement offering to God in response to the consequences of Korah’s rebellion against Moses and his leadership (Num 16:46).

The problem is when we find ourselves living with a constant sense of urgency; we get stuck there. Every situation feels like an emergency, whether it is or not.

Holy leisure and unholy idleness are polar opposites.

Relaxed can be very attentive and engaged. A sprinter standing in the starting blocks is both ready and relaxed at the same time. Jesus modeled for us not only how to withdraw and linger in God’s presence, but also how to relax in it.

Despite this divine precedent and example, we’re often tempted to think that unhurry equals laziness.

“The trouble is that many of us are permanently stuck in deadline mode, leaving little time to ease off and recharge. The things that need slowness—strategic planning, creative thought, building relationships—get lost in the mad dash to keep up, or even just to look busy”- Carl Honoré, in his book *In Praise of Slowness*,

The problem comes when our accelerator is stuck and we no longer know the way to fill needs that can only be met in slowness.

The drive to possess is an engine for hurry.

“The question that must guide all organizing activity in a parish is not how to keep people busy, but how to keep them from being so busy that they can no longer hear the voice of God who speaks in silence.”

-Henri Nouwen

As hurry narrows my vision, I lose perspective on what matters most.

Good work grows best in the soil of good rest.

What if I learned to work from a place of unhurried abiding? Isn't that what Jesus did? We find no evidence that Jesus was ever in a rush. In fact, there is more evidence that at times Jesus frustrated his followers because of his lack of hurry. Jesus lived an unhurried and fruitful life. This fact can sound like an oxymoron to us.

Consider, for instance, what Jesus did when he learned about Lazarus's serious illness. Was the Jesus who heard about his close friend and waited two days before going to him hurried or unhurried? Was the Jesus who responded to the bleeding woman's needs when Jairus's daughter was near death hurried or unhurried? Jesus was engaged and active, but unanxious and unhurried.

This false equation: "Possessing more + consuming more = living more."

The evil one tempts us to hurry ahead of God and his timetable for giving authority and bestowing honor. We want power and influence. We want to shine. We want to be lifted up in the eyes of others. We want to be noticed. All of these come as grace-gifts from the Father; not as prizes to be earned.

True influence is always given to us by God; it is not something we take for ourselves.

May we avoid the kind of frantic busyness that bears little resemblance to the pace and focus of Jesus' life and ministry.

How many of us are very efficient in managing tasks but very unloving toward the people whom those tasks involve?

The pace of my life often feels much less like a playful breeze and much more like a hurricane.

Martha's worried words to Jesus exposed her hurried heart. Doing something good for him took precedence over listening to something good from him.

"We live in a culture where our identity is based on how well we do, how much we do, how much we possess and what others say about us." Henri Nouwen

Holy leisure is a way of recognizing that everything God has invited me to do can be done without anxious hurry.

A person who is always available is not worth enough when he is available.

Elton Trueblood warned about this: a person who is always available is not worth enough when they are available.