

## Great Gonerby Rectory

Dear Friends,

*This month, David Spence - an ordinand (C of E ministry trainee) is being placed with us in order to gain some practical experience of being a vicar! So I have asked David to write this month's letter -*

**“Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”**

*(Jesus, Matt 11:28)*

It is coming up to the time of year when many of us will go on our summer holidays. Our holidays are a great time of rest in a world rushing from one thing to the next. For many, their holiday is the one time to switch off and relax. Even booking these holidays can be part of the rush!

One of the themes which runs through the whole Bible is rest. God himself rested once the world had been made and so gave a day of rest each week for the human race. Not only that but we are told that when God rested he was also “refreshed”. The idea of a ‘Sabbath’ was not originally given by God as a rule to restrict our shopping on a Sunday, but as a gift for our refreshment, through rest and through worship.

However, there is another dimension to rest in the Bible – that of freedom. The Israelites’ release from the oppression of Pharaoh in the Exodus and their entering the Promised Land is seen in terms of rest. Later, the Israelite’s literal freedom and rest becomes a picture of God’s rescue of us from evil. This rescue brings freedom from our rebellion against him and rest from our strivings to be good enough.

Rest is seen as a picture of the blessings of a life lived trusting in God. Therefore Jesus welcomes us to come to him and receive rest, to enter into a relationship with him, to learn about God through him, and to find refreshment and new life. This was the original vision for our day of rest on Sunday – reconnecting with God. And it also points forward to the Christian hope of a final rest with God in Heaven.

In an age where rushing around is becoming the norm, Psalm 127 reminds us that ‘in vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat — for God grants sleep to those he loves.’ We need to build into our lives regular times of rest – weekly, monthly and yearly. Times when we can find refreshment through the natural rest that our minds and bodies will receive.

But they also need to be more than that. They are not just times to play sport or watch TV (although rest of this sort is important). These are times when we find the supernatural rest of re-connecting with our Creator God.

We can do this in many ways. All Christians need to invest in prayer, worship and reading the Bible. But we can also rest in God through time enjoying creation: walking, running, fishing or gardening; through time spent with friends and family; or even reading books.

Find wholesome activities and do them with God. Pray that he will meet you there. As Paul says “whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” In doing so we not only experience the fullness of this life, but also live out our hope of our final rest with God.

God bless,

**David Spence**