

24 RESTING IN RELATIONSHIP

Between his job, school work, music lessons, and swimming practices, he was getting really tired out.

He rarely went to church. Who had the time? So when the pastor announced on the first day of confirmation that she expected the class to hand in monthly sermon notes, he was angry.

Well, actually, he'd have to say he was scared. He was already beginning to feel that it was too much. He was feeling behind, tired, worn out. He wondered if people his age ever had nervous breakdowns.

As he sat in church, he shook his head. He didn't need this on top of everything else. What he needed was rest.

People were standing up and singing. He'd heard these words before. But this time the question seemed to be *his* question: "Alleluia, Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia! Alleluia!"

That morning the pastor preached about resting in God's arms. "God and I have something in common," he thought to himself smiling. "We both want me to rest!"

3 STATEMENTS

- Honor God's name; lift it up in prayer.
- The Sabbath is a day of rest—a day to enjoy the ones you love.
- The Ten Commandments is more than a list of "don't"s. It is also a list of "do"s.

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Source

GOD'S NAME

Isn't it strange how some people are not at all ashamed to swear, but would die a thousand deaths if someone heard them say God's name in a prayer?

That's backwards! The Second Commandment says, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain."

Film makers and TV writers sprinkle their work with swearing. They say they want to reflect reality, because that's how people talk today. But it's a vicious cycle, because movies and TV shape reality as much as they reflect it.

But God won't have it. God is calling you to give honor where honor is due. *Honor God's name; lift it up in prayer.*

People usually swear when they are at a loss for something better to say. They want to appear strong and impressive. They think swearing makes them seem powerful.

There is no power in treating the name of God that way. There is power in prayer.

RELAX, RELATE, RECREATE

People sin against all the Commandments. But the Third Commandment is ignored by almost everyone. Even in the church, the Sabbath day is not respected. If a pastor sins against the Sixth Commandment, he or she usually gets fired. But if a pastor sins against the Third Commandment by working seven days a week, the congregation smiles and says, "We got a hard worker for our money."

After six days of creating, God made a seventh day for recreating. It was a Sabbath—a day to relax.

The Third Commandment says, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." Some people think that means you've got to sit around and do nothing,

The Sabbath is a day of rest—a day to enjoy the ones you love.



JANIS MCLAVS

as if God wanted you to be bored! This day is a day for relaxation *and* recreation. It is a day for rest *and* enjoyment.

"A whole day of rest and enjoyment?" That's right. This is not a luxury; it is God's law! God knew that some people would feel guilty if they stopped working once in a while. So God made this a Commandment so we'd feel guilty if we didn't enjoy ourselves one day a week. What a gift!

The Old Testament people and modern Jews celebrate the Sabbath on the traditional seventh day: Saturday. Most Christians (with the exception of denominations like the Seventh-Day Adventists) celebrate Sabbath on Sunday because Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday.

It doesn't much matter *when* you have your Sabbath. But you must have one—and that's an order and gift from God! So you work on Sunday? Fine. Celebrate Sabbath on some other day of the week.

Jesus made it clear that if something unusual comes up and you have to work on your Sabbath, God would understand (Mark 2:23-28; Luke 14:1-6). But as a rule, Jesus wants you to obey this, and all the Commandments.

There's more. The Sabbath is not only a gift for relaxation and recreation. It is also a gift for relationships. How did Jesus summarize the Ten Commandments? Love God and love people. So how can you best keep the Sabbath holy? By taking time to nurture your relationships with God and with people. What a gift! *The Sabbath is a day of rest—a day to enjoy the ones you love.*

And since the Sabbath is in large part a day to celebrate and nurture your relationship with God, this Commandment is also a Commandment about worship.

DONE AND LEFT UNDONE

"We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone."

That is a quote from the prayer of confession in the Brief Order for Con-

feffion and Forgiveness in *Lutheran Book of Worship* (page 56). Most people think of sin as something you do wrong. But sin can also be when you don't do something right. Remember, sin is anything that separates you from God. And that can be something you have done or something you have left undone. It is wrong to steal. It is just as wrong to fail to share your extra food with someone who is starving.

The Ten Commandments is more than a list of "don't"s. It is also a list of "do"s. Luther knew that. As you study the Commandments, you'll notice that Luther first tells us what we shouldn't do and then tells us what we should do.

Don't swear. Do use God's name in prayer.

Don't neglect the Word of God. Do hear it.

The Second and Third Commandments are not just against swearing and neglecting God's Word. They also say that God encourages you to speak to God in prayer and hear God in the Word. The Second Commandment is all about speaking; the Third Commandment is all about hearing.

When Jesus was on earth he healed many sick people. It should be no surprise that often he healed those who could not hear or speak. When Jesus healed people, he made them whole. He made them able to respond—gave them "response-ability" for relationship.

1. Look up the following Bible passages. What kind of healing took place?

Matthew 9:32-33 _____

Mark 7:32-37 _____

Luke 11:14 _____

2. Look up the following Bible passages and check the statements that apply. Psalm 51:15; Psalm 85:8; Psalm 86:7; Romans 10:17; Revelation 2:11.

_____ We can praise God with our words.

_____ Hearing God's Word makes a difference in our lives.



_____ God speaks to the people of God.

_____ God answers us when we call upon God.

_____ We come to faith through hearing the Word.

_____ We can hear God's Word through sermons.

3. In what ways can you speak to God during Sunday worship?

During the week?

4. In what ways can you hear God speak to you during Sunday worship?

During the week?

Honor God's name; lift it up in prayer.

TALKING LIKE THE STARS

You have seen how to use God's name to talk to God. You can also use God's name to talk *about* God.

One of the ways you can serve God is by telling others how great God is—to share with them the story of God's love.

Psalm 19 describes God's glory. It compares the beauty of the sky to human words. Read Psalm 19:1-4, 14 and answer the following questions.

1. What is the sky telling, even though it does not have the ability to speak?

2. What gift do we have that the sky doesn't have?

3. Verse 14 could be our prayer. If God grants this prayer, what kinds of words will come from your mouth this week?

I THINK

The confirmation student in the story at the beginning of this session was too busy. There is an old expression that says that we shouldn't be so busy that we can't stop to enjoy the flowers along the path.

Flowers are nice, but God is more interested in relationships. Are you too busy to enjoy your family? Your friends? Your God? How can you structure your life to not be too busy? Discuss these questions with your classmates.



RICHARD WEST

Shaping
life

WORSHIP: BLESSING OR BORING?

Once the apostle Paul preached a sermon that started after supper and went until midnight (and you thought *your* pastor preached too long)! Paul

and his listeners were on the third floor. A man named Eutychus who was sitting in a window sill, fell asleep and fell out of the window and died. (It puts new meaning to the expression "bored to death.") Paul rushed down and performed a miracle and the man lived. (The story is told in Acts 20:7-12.)

There are some lessons here. Don't sit in church window sills, and (to you preachers) keep it short.

Worship can sometimes be boring. Sermons can be too long and complicated. Ministers and others in charge of worship may need to work hard to make sure that Sunday mornings are as exciting and as powerful as the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ. But what happens on Sunday mornings is probably something that you can't easily change right now. What you *can* change is you.

There may not be many *idol* worshippers these days, but there are many *idle* worshippers. If you come to church idly hoping to be entertained, it's time for a change.

Worship was never intended to be entertainment. It is not a spectator sport. Worship is something you *do*.



Read the following suggestions and check those you could do next time you worship.

___ Go to church ready to *do* worship.

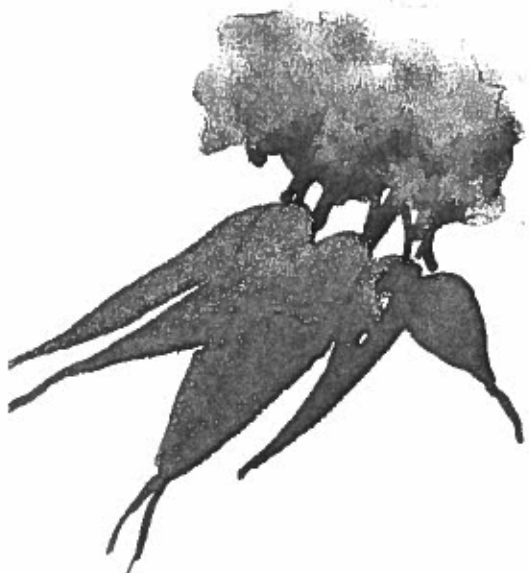
___ Really pray the liturgy.

___ Pay attention to the words of the hymns.

___ Listen to Scripture and remind yourself, "Here is God's Word for me."

___ Listen to the sermon knowing that somewhere in all of this, God is speaking to you.

Follow through on your intentions. *You* can make a difference in worship.



CARROTS!

There are all kinds of ways to pray. Sometimes we get stuck in the rut of only praying when we need something. There is nothing wrong with praying for something you need; that's what God wants you to do. But there are other kinds of prayers, too.

If the only time a friend talked to you was when he or she wanted something, that person wouldn't be much of a friend. Your relationship would be pretty shallow.

It's the same way with God. God wants you to talk about everything and God wants your prayer life to cover the whole range of conversation.

To help you remember all the different kinds of prayers, you can learn about *CARROTS!* Here is a list of kinds

of prayers; the first letters from each word spell *CARROTS*.

C Confession. We tell God how sorry we are for sinning.

A Adoration. We praise God and say how wonderful God is.

R Requests. We ask God for all the things we want and need.

R Remembering. We recall God's actions in our lives.

O Others. We ask God to be with or help other people even our enemies!

T Thanks. We tell God "thank you" for all that God does for us.

S Soundingboard. We just talk to God. We all need to talk sometimes and just have someone listen. We all have questions and need someone to hear us ask. Here, God invites us to just talk—ramble on—like we would to our best friend.

When you pray, when you worship, pray through the *CARROTS* list. Take the time to write a prayer, using this list.

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The Ten Commandments is more than a list of "don't's." It is also a list of "do's."

FURTHER

opportunities

Bible Reading

There is an interesting story in Luke 10:38-42. To the modern eye, one woman appears productive, the other looks lazy. How would your family react if this scene were played out in real life at your home? Was Martha all wrong? Wasn't Mary unloving by not helping her sister? And what is the "one thing" that is needed? What is "the better part"? What is Jesus saying here to you?

Memory

Memorize the Second and Third Commandments and their meanings. As an additional challenge, memorize one of more of the following: Psalm 143:8; Luke 10:41-42; Romans 6:4-5; Luther's Morning and Evening Prayers pages 163 and 166 in *LBW*.

Activity 1

Interview a Jewish rabbi or a Seventh Day Adventist about observing the Sabbath. After the interview, reflect on how you have viewed the Sabbath in the past. How might the Lord be calling you to a deeper understanding of the Third Commandment? Share this information with your class.

Activity 2

Make paper carrots and use them to tell elementary Sunday school children about this method of prayer. Your class may even want to do a children's sermon using carrots.

Activity 3

As a class, talk to your pastor or worship committee about how worship is planned in your congregation. Perhaps make some suggestions, but remember that worship is finally something that you do.

FOCUS

ON THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

Martin Luther wrote two wonderful prayers for his Small Catechism: one for the morning and one for the evening. They are on pages 163 and 166 of *LBW*.

Luther suggested that when we pray them we should make the sign of the cross and say, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

For Luther, the sign of the cross was a way of remembering our Bap-

tism. (When you were baptized the pastor made the sign of the cross over you.) And the sign of the cross reminds us of the way Jesus died on the cross.

When we cross ourselves we remember the cross is for us. "Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death . . . for if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Romans 6:4-5).

Some people think only Roman Catholics "cross themselves," but it's a good Lutheran practice, too!