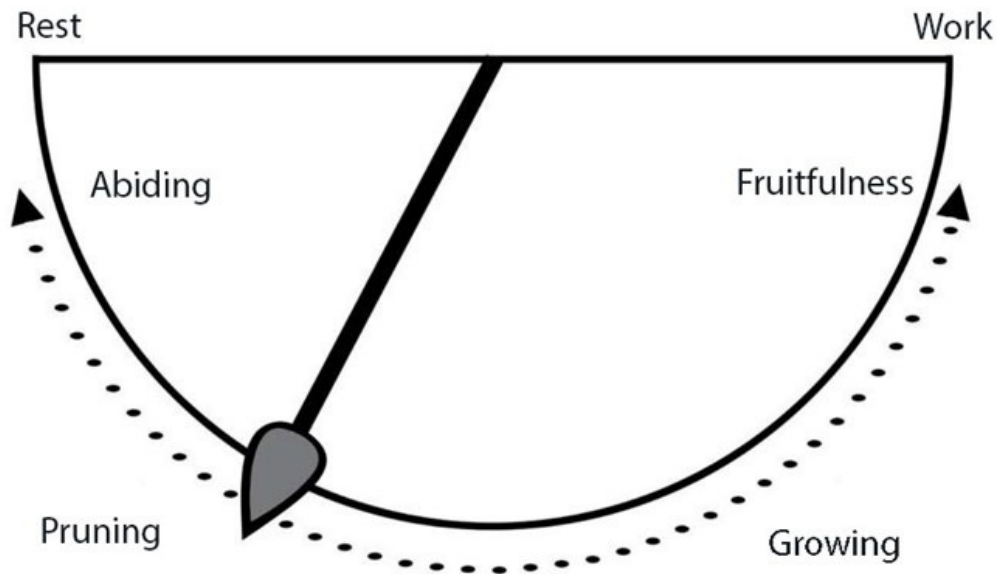


LIVING IN THE SAME RHYTHM AS CHRIST.



Genesis 1: 26-2:3; 2:15; 3:8-9.

We are made for *fruitfulness* – not just existence.

The first command – be fruitful and multiply.

We are not made to bury our talents.

However we are not workaholics – *stress can be creative* – but there is a *right amount* of stress.

In Genesis humans were designed to walk with God in a daily rhythm.

We were created on the sixth day to work, but our *first immediate experience was of rest* on the seventh.

We rest first, then work. WE WORK FROM REST.

Do we schedule rest, before work?

John 15: fruitfulness happens in stages: abiding, pruning, growing, fruitfulness.

Growth comes from knowing how to abide.

We rest in different ways – extraverts and intraverts.

Jesus: had extended times of retreat; went away; took the disciples to quiet places.



I.D. GROUP RESOURCE

For each of these statements, put a number between 1 and 10, where 1 is “Not at all: and 10 is “Completely”.

- I protect my day off.
- I take my annual leave.
- I protect time with my spouse/family/friends.
- I am good at weighing up whether to take on new responsibilities.
- I have an intimacy with God which overflows to others.
- I have times of withdrawing to be more aware of the Lord’s love.
- I have regular times of retreat and refreshment in my diary.
- I am experiencing fruitfulness.
- I understand how I rest in the best way for my personality.
- I give space to listening to God.
- I am fit, and exercise regularly.
- I sleep well.
- I eat well. (Healthily!)
- I often laugh, and have fun.
- When I have to make a choice about my use of time and/or priorities I am able to process this with trusted others.
- I have time and space to process the criticisms and disappointments that are part of ministry and spiritual battle.
- I have a work-life balance I would be happy for the people to whom I lead to imitate.
- I am not driven to be too busy by false pride, or concern about what others think of me.



It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view. The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness. No programme accomplishes the church's mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything. This is what we are about: We plant seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

