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Taking a break?

It's the middle of summer. People are taking a break from the normal routines, coming and going. Okanagan locals and visitors flock to the lake, tour vineyards and wineries, take in Knox Mountain and Myra Creek Parks, the Kettle Valley Steam Railway and many more sights.

All of this in spite of the heat. Every day from July 5th through the 24th has had a temperature of over 30 degrees, with about half of the days reaching 35 degrees or higher. Even with some feeling that it has been too hot, most people get out and about. The health authorities give us tips to keep safe in the heat, such as drink plenty of water, always wear sunscreen, stay in the shade when you can, and don't exert or exercise as much.



It's good to take a break from the normal routines. Researchers tell us the brain functions better after rest, that a break can improve sleep, creativity and productivity, renew our spirit. All of that is true because God's design for us includes breaks, rest, and changing routines at different times. Change of routine? Yes.

At the same time, there are some spiritual dangers in a routine-breaking, routine-changing summer. We can, as it has been said, *take a vacation from God*. But while it is good to not exert ourselves as much physically in the summer heat, it is not good to slack off our spiritual exercise, to take a break from our relationship with God at any time.

So let's review a few basic tips for keeping a vital relationship with God this summer.

- As you schedule changes make sure to plan, including scheduled times to focus spiritually. You know the old saying, "Most people fail not because they planned to fail, but because they failed to plan."
- Take advantage of different settings and times to be alone with God, reading His word and praying. Years ago when we had church family camps I would usually get up before anyone else, go down to the dock, pray and read Scripture. Those were meaningful, refreshing moments with God.

- Try checking our library, your Kindle or other resources for some good books to read. Perhaps some that are a bit out of your normal scope of reading. Expanding your horizons can deepen your walk with God.
- Stay engaged in serving God. While it can be good to take a break from the ways you normally serve God throughout the year, look for some opportunities to informally and even formally engage with and serve others.
- If your schedule takes you away, plan to worship with God's people where you will be. We are a destination spot for many people. I am always impressed and encouraged when people who are vacationing here, and who have no connection to us, come to worship with us on a Sunday morning. Their vacation plans include worshiping with God's people.
- Look for God's glory and beauty in the different parts of creation you take in. King David declared,

“The heavens tell of the glory of God; and their expanse declares the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.” (Psalm 19:1-2)

The apostle Paul adds,

“since the creation of the world [God's] invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by what has been made.” (Romans 1:20)

Taking a break this summer? Make sure you don't take a break from God.

Pastor Lyle