

Rhythms of Rest, Renewal, and Shared Ministry

As summer gives way to a new school year, many of us notice a shift in rhythm. Calendars fill quickly with school events, sports, rehearsals, work responsibilities, meetings, and church commitments. For pastors and lay leaders alike, this can be a season when ministry needs feel urgent and the people who faithfully carry so much begin to feel worn down.

In Mark 6:30–34, the disciples return to Jesus after a season of ministry and report to him everything they have done and taught. Instead of assigning them another task, Jesus recognizes they are overwhelmed: people are “coming and going,” and the disciples do not even have time to eat. Jesus says, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while” (Mark 6:31).

This is a word many of us need to hear. Rest is not a reward we earn after everything is finished. In ministry, the work is rarely finished. There is always another email, another meeting, another need, another decision, and another person in need of care. Jesus invites his disciples to rest in the midst of ministry, not after they have exhausted themselves.

Mark also gives us an honest picture of how difficult rest can be. The disciples get into a boat to go away, but the crowd sees where they are going and arrives before them. The needs remain. Jesus responds to the crowd with compassion, teaching people who are “like sheep without a shepherd.” The passage holds two truths together: people need care, and those who provide care need rest. Faithful ministry requires compassion, but it cannot demand constant availability from the same people.

This season, congregations may need to consider their own rhythms. When volunteers are juggling jobs, caregiving, children returning to school, and extracurricular activities, churches should not assume that commitment means saying yes to every request. We can honor people’s gifts without treating them as an endless source of labor.

Consider asking:

- Who has been carrying too much for too long?
- Where can we invite and equip new people to assume leadership roles?
- What ministry, meeting, or expectation may need to be paused, adjusted, or simplified?
- How can we make time for prayer, reflection, fellowship, and a genuine Sabbath within congregational life?
- What practices help our pastors and lay leaders nurture their souls?

Healthy ministry has rhythm. There are seasons for gathering and sending, serving and receiving, speaking and listening, and planting and resting. When we make room for rest, inspiration, and renewal, we are not abandoning the church’s mission. We recognize that the church belongs to God and that no one person is responsible for carrying it alone.

May this new season bring a gentler, more faithful rhythm to our congregations. May we care for one another, share the work more widely, and heed Jesus’ invitation: “Come away . . . and rest a while.”