

***"I will also bless the foreigners who commit themselves to the Lord, who serve him and love his name,
who worship him and do not desecrate the Sabbath day of rest, and who hold fast to my covenant.
(Isaiah 56:6)***

We are blessed! We are blessed to be a part of a congregation that sees the need for Sabbath...especially for the Pastor who works almost every Sunday Sabbath! At Christmas time, the Congregational Council presented a small gift to Carol and I for a day retreat in Sedona at the Spirit Quest Retreat Center. This next week, over Valentines Day, we are heading up to Sedona for a few days to participate in a Couples retreat at Spirit Quest. We will be staying at an RV park called, Lu Lu RV Park that has beautiful sites for our camper right along a stream beneath the mountains.

Spirit Quest describes their goals by stating:

"Our lives get richer and more whole as we seek balance and serenity. Our spiritual retreats allow us to assist you in your own raising of consciousness. We can help you learn to 'let it go' and will help you gain more tools to discover your purpose and reason for being."

This adventure sounds a lot like the Christian understanding of a Sabbath. Sabbath is time that is reserved in our lives for God. It is time to rest from everything that keeps us busy and consumed with the demands of our life and culture. Some people think that Sundays are the reserved day of the week for the Sabbath... "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy." Yes, that is Sabbath. I also like to think of sabbath as anytime we stop and enjoy God's creation and the presence of Christ in our lives.

Carol and I are looking forward to this Sabbath. During our special day of Sabbath, we have signed up to for a meditation session where we will get to experience a guided meditation and learn techniques to incorporate into our lives to help manage stress levels. We are told we will "emerge with a profound sense of joy!" After that we will go directly to a couples massage to help us reflect upon the meditation experience.

Another part of the retreat will include a Sedona Vortex Experience. Now I am very open to God working through creation in many different ways including the earth. I have been told that vortex energy is everywhere in Sedona and that energy can help to "untangle and release stagnating energy" in our body. It can bring us closer to the Divine and deepen Spirituality. I'm looking forward to receiving my own quartz crystal! All this is supposed to leave us refreshed, renewed, balanced, and in harmony. I'm also looking forward to that! I love Sabbaths!

I pray this month for all of us because we all stray from God. Even though we validate God with the best intentions, only to find ourselves caught up in a snare that pulls us away from sabbath. This is when think we can live without God and that can drain all peace and life from us. Let's all take time for Sabbath... even and especially on Sundays. Come be filled spiritually through worship! Thank you, Tina and Pastor Roger Hanson for filling in for me this weekend. Carol and I will return on Tuesday.

AMEN

Pastor Tony Scheer