

VACATION TIME

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God has so structured our existence in this life that honest work is fulfilling, beneficial, honorable, and required of all mature, able-bodied people (Gen. 2:15; 2 The. 3:10–14). However, our Father has also recognized our need for occasional rest and recreation. Though an Infinite Being is obviously not subject to fatigue, still God set a pattern of rest at the end of the creation week and in the Mosaic laws concerning Sabbath Day observance (Gen. 2:1–3; Exo. 20:8–11). This pattern has a significant influence on our society even today. In addition, there were occasions during the ministry of Jesus when He recommended rest and/or seems to have desired a short break from the crowds that so often thronged around Him (cf. Mark 6:30–32; 7:24).

During the summer months, it is quite common for people to engage in recreational trips—otherwise known as “vacations.” This is especially true with families who have school-age children. As already noted, it is appropriate and beneficial that we take breaks from our labors from time to time. This can be a critical factor in our long-term effectiveness at meeting the challenges life has to offer. However, in taking vacations from earthly tasks, it may sometimes be tempting to “take a vacation” from our responsibilities as Christians.

Put another way, we need to remind ourselves regularly (including when we’re on vacation) that, if we are to be faithful Christians, there are certain matters and responsibilities from which we will never think of “taking a break.” Such matters and responsibilities would include Bible study, worship (observing the Lord’s Supper, giving of our means, having fellowship with brethren, etc.) and daily Bible reading and prayer,

just to name a few. When we happen to be traveling somewhere and are out of our normal routine, these things won't just take place by accident. A certain amount of planning and purpose and effort will be required (motivated by the conviction that, yes, these things really are that important) to ensure that we take part in them. (And, sadly, locating faithful congregations when we're away from home takes more effort than it did a few years ago—especially in certain areas of the country.)

We need to remember that God's requirements to "forsake not the assembly" (Heb. 10:25) and "lay by in store on the first day of the week" (I Cor. 16:2) still apply while we're on vacation. We still need nourishment from His Word and encouragement/provocation in spiritual matters from faithful brethren, even when we're on vacation (maybe more so then). We also need to remember that the work of the congregation at home (work that is tied to a budget, which is affected by our giving) still needs to continue, even when we're on vacation. We can't take a break from being children of God.