



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Contemplative Rhythms
Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor
Scripture: Luke 5:15-16

¹⁵ Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. ¹⁶ But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

We are called to be a monastic community, where we slow down to be with God. At New Life Fellowship, we look to monks and nuns to see what it looks like to be monastic community so that we can help cultivate monastic moments in our lives.

In today's scripture, we see Jesus on a normal day where he is attending to a large crowd of people with many needs and wants, although it looks like he needs support, because of all of the types of people coming to him. He calls to his disciples to train them so that they can help with the crowds coming to see Jesus. The crowds, however, do not want to talk to the disciples, only wanting Jesus because of their deep needs. Jesus had no point of escape from all the work that was in front of him, so he had to be very intentional about pulling away because of overwhelming nature coming against him.

The same is true for the world we live in today, which is overwhelming where so many things coming our way every day. Add to this stress within our families, regarding our finances, with our health and Covid, and the list goes on and on. With this barrage of things coming at us, our response needs to be to look to Jesus.

Contemplative Rhythms are the unhurried ways we open ourselves to God that enable us to lovingly offer ourselves to others.

Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. Jesus is fully God and fully human and understands what it is like to feel the burdens of being human, so he steps away. We, on the other hand, often wait until we are at the end of our rope to reach out to Jesus.

Unless we are regularly withdrawing, we will regularly wither.

The good news is that if you are withering, the Spirit of God wants to empower you today!

Two invitations for us to live out regularly withdrawing:

On a daily basis:

Contemplative Prayer – Attentiveness to the presence of God without words. In this kind of prayer, there is no expectation to receive anything. You just want to be present to the presence of God and just BE with God. We grow in this area by: befriending silence, normalizing boredom, reframing distractions, understanding that prayer is an act that forms us and not something that we master, and trusting that God is always waiting for you with open arms.

On a weekly basis:

Sabbath Keeping – A 24-hour period without anxiety or “have-to’s” which (over time) is to result in deep rest and renewal. One reason we are so exhausted is because we do not practice sabbath. We are to remember that Sabbath is not a reward but a gift, helps us number our days, helps us cultivate presence with one another, reminds us that we are not the center of the universe and helps us find rest for our soul.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor, begins Week 1 of our Deeply Formed Life sermon series. Pastor Rich explores Contemplative Rhythms for an exhausted world and show us ways that we can begin to implement monastic values into our lives.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, did you grow up in a home where rest was valued, where you were part of times where no work was done? Or did you grow up in a home where those who worked were always working and not resting? Did you experience shape the way that you view rest and work today?
3. Have you been able to find extended periods of rest, where you experienced your soul being touched by God? If not, the Holy Spirit has an invitation for you today. One where you could begin to live a life like Jesus, intentionally withdrawing from all of the noise and stresses of life. Be intentional this week, finding time to withdraw and be still, just being with God, not expecting anything in return (God here I am). Befriend silence, knowing that it is a gift and not your enemy.
4. Do you already have a 24-hour period where you practice Sabbath? If you do not, maybe this is one of the reasons why you are so exhausted and need this to help feed your soul. Set aside time this week to begin practicing Sabbath, even if you begin with a 12-hour period and work up to a full 24-hour period of rest. Remember that the Sabbath is an invitation and a gift from God which helps us not be dominated by our overwork, were we can live by and follow the examples that Jesus has taught us.