

## Rest Genesis 2

“By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.”

Genesis 2:2

Having been made in the image of God, human beings first experience was a day of rest. This raises for us a profound implication. You are designed to work from a state of rest, not rest from work. This is not just a clever play on words but a fundamental revelation of God's creation that Jesus is drawing upon in John 15.

The extraordinary and profound place of rest which we find in the Genesis story is reinforced in the book of Exodus where we find the Ten Commandments. These Commandments are boundary markers for our covenant relationship. One of these markers is “take a day off”. This commandment is listed alongside, 'You shall not murder' - it's similarly important; at least to our well-being, as opposed to someone else's!

## Pruning John 15:1-11

Every Israelite had their own fig tree and vine and everyone knew how to grow them. For the first three years vines were allowed to grow as a stocky tree but not allowed to bear fruit. At the end of each blossoming season they would be cut back, then after three years they would be allowed to bear fruit.

After the fruit had been picked the branches were pruned back to 3mm.

In the slow growing months of autumn the branches would literally, abide in the vine, the vine would grow around it. Then in spring time green tendrils would emerge and be supported by crutches, and because they were supported they were able to support the fruit.

It was also fruit that would last; the grapes would happily stay on the vine for several months before being picked. However, the moment the fruit was taken the branch would be cut back.

## Fruit Genesis 1:26-28

The first words ever spoken to humanity are... “Be fruitful and increase in number.” But the meaning of this was wider than just having babies. It was the call upon humanity to produce something. A call that was consistent with the image of God who has just produced the Cosmos. Our task was to take the stuff of the world and make something. “15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” Genesis 2:15

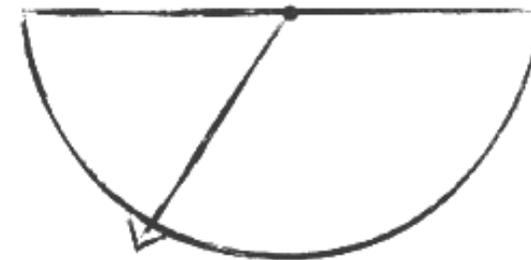
Productivity is deeply connected with work. The calling of humanity is always to work, not always to be employed but to be involved in fruitful activity. There will be fruitful work/activity in heaven, because this is part of what it means to be human.



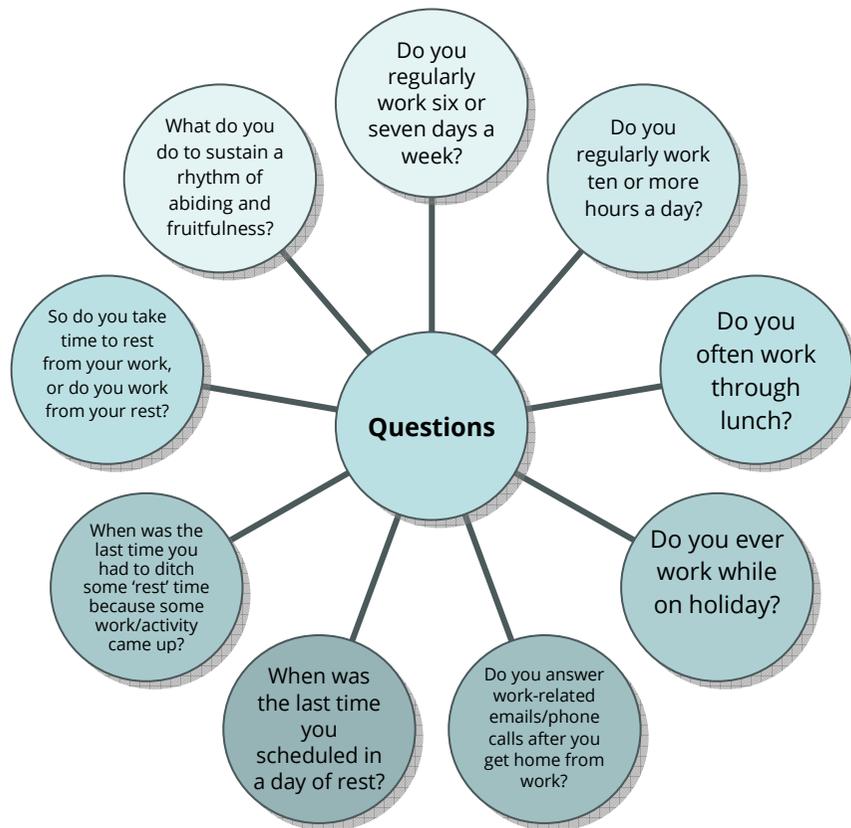
Altrincham  
BAPTIST CHURCH

Small Groups at ABC

## Discipleship Basics 2:



## Work & Rest; Fruit & Pruning



The seasons of our lives are also important. Adolescence, adulthood, singleness, marriage, parenthood etc., require different things of us. How would you describe your current season? What does this require of you now, and where will you be in five years time?

- Rest in the day** - A daily structure which enables you to rest and work, as well as invest in relationships and recreation. Personal discipline is needed to maintain this.
- Rest in the week** - At least one day for rest. Can we be more effective in planning for and preserving this day? When can we drop work in making space for special family members or friends?
- Rest in the month** - Can you take your diary and look back over the past 12 months and see any patterns in your rest. Can you look ahead 12 months and plan now, just like we plan holidays, to ensure that we have room for rest? When are your times to stop? When are your times to celebrate? When are your times to retreat?