



The Sacredness of Rest

Velda Love
Minister for Racial Justice

Rest is not optional. Resting one's whole self is necessary. Closing your eyes and being still is not an elusive privilege. "Rest is as natural as breathing and waking up." (Hersey, page 82).

Rest does not always come easy for those who are living in fear, filled with anxieties, and worried about daily bread, steady paychecks, and sufficient housing. Realities persist that oftentimes keep our central nervous systems working well beyond healthy levels.

I am a minister and educator doing racial justice work to dismantle prescribed notions that some people are superior and others (notably those who do not look, act, worship, or behave the same) are less than and/or inferior. This work has been a deep passion of mine for thirty-plus years—and it is exhausting. Sharing best practices with diverse communities and encouraging them to develop policies and behaviors to do no harm oftentimes feels futile. What will it take to implement and maintain practices of equity and full inclusion for all God's people in the 21st century?

When I no longer had the energy or spiritual strength to pursue the answers to this question, I was able to remove myself from the world of work and take a sabbatical rest with the blessing of my employer. I was free to unwind from "grind culture." I restricted my own technology use. I chose not to ingest messages and voyeuristic images of the ongoing violent offenses perpetuated against my siblings domestically or globally.

Turning off gadgets, stepping away from daily routines, and disengaging from political rhetoric is not an absence of caring for people. Self-care is sacred and necessary.



[Dr. Chanequa Walker Barnes](#) gave me new practices for self-care from her book, Sacred Self-Care. Takeaways were:

1. I am a divine creation;
2. Being created in the image and likeness of the Creator is God's gift to us;
3. I was reminded that I am beautifully and wonderfully created by God.

Rest is especially sacred for Black bodies globally. Too many economic and power structures are built to overwork Black bodies in particular and working class, poor, and oppressed bodies generally. Tricia Hersey, founder of The Nap Ministry and author of [Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto](#), writes, "In a society built on a slaveholding economy in which every person's worth is determined by their productivity, prioritizing wellness is a subversive act." Hersey's book strives to "disrupt and push back against capitalism and white supremacy by connecting to the liberating power of rest, daydreaming, and naps as a During my sabbatical, the impulse to be still and listen to my spirit outweighed habits of being busy, doing something, and working toward productivity. I made space for nothing but deep and uninterrupted rest, naps, walks, and daydreaming on my deck while sunshine bathed my body in warm fall temperatures. I was on a journey of daily practices to honor my body as sacred. "Rest is a meticulous love practice."

As my sabbatical journey moved toward completion, my inward transformation remained, with a holistic awareness of how to show up as sacred and rested. I am sauntering into spaces. As I enter, I am not in a hurry. My mood is relaxed, and I resist the powers and principalities of a hyper-capitalist system.

May rest be your subversive act of self-care. May you nap regularly and often. And see your whole self as sacred because God's gift to us is rest.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rev. Dr. Velda Love is the Minister for Racial Justice and Lead for Join the Movement Toward Racial Justice Campaign for the United Church of Christ.

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