



The Outer Leaf

Live Oaks
Community Church

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"Leading edge news and views of the ministries of Live Oaks Community Church"

Time Off That Rejuvenates

Summer is coming, a change of pace for many and a time for taking a needed break. Yet, as we look to the summer change of pace it is important to remember that our physical, emotional, and spiritual sides have something in common – it only takes a few days to get them out of shape.

That is the truth of it! Running science has found if a runner stops running for only a week, their maximal aerobic capacity (max VO₂), one of the key indicators of performance potential, begins to decrease. If the fit runner takes two to three weeks off he/she will add a minute or more to his/her 5-K time. Stroke volume, the amount of blood pumped by the heart per beat, also wanes by 10 percent or more in just three weeks. Even your muscles' aerobic enzymes (key chemicals that help produce the energy you need to run) fall by 25 percent or more in 21 days.

Losing our spiritual shape happens much the same way. Miss just one day of reading God's word and it is easy to go three days or the whole week before picking up your Bible again. Take a Sunday or two off from worshiping with the church on the Sabbath and it takes much less to keep you from the 3rd week. Go through a week or two without taking steps of faith and you will begin to rely on your own wisdom and strength instead of the Spirit and your relationship with God. Before you know it you feel spiritually lethargic and have little hunger for righteousness.

However, well timed layoffs and vacations are needed. We need to take them without feeling guilty. Some very good things happen during off time. For instance, your body, mind and relationships have time to heal. You have time and space to let the Spirit repair the abstract and concrete bumps, bruises and strains that happen during the hard work months of your year. Having a regular short sabbatical of rest safeguards you against major spiritual and relational future injuries. At the same time, downtime can eventually lead to revived emotional, spiritual and physical strength, renewed life in ministry, expanded outreach, and greater gains in spiritual maturity. It can fill your empty tank!

However, our downtime must have at least a simple strategy to ensure that we benefit from it instead of backslide into a discipleship dead-end. Implement these "vacation time" training steps that will give you a break while also keeping you in spiritual shape to follow God where He leads...

- **Come** to God and His word **daily**. Vacation and the summer months usually are not the best times for major study and in-depth small groups. Yet, it is a good time to enjoy the presence of God, listen for Him, and take in the basic message of the Bible.
- **Hide** a scripture or principle from God's word in your heart **weekly**. Take a verse(s), phrase or principle that you read in your week and dwell on it in thought, prayer and in conversations with others until you can quote it from memory and have received something specific from God in it.
- **Apply** in faith one truth that God has revealed to you to your life, relationships and/or ministry **monthly**. This step does not have to be grand, but it must be applied in faith to the Lord you are following.
- **Remain** in fellowship with the church body. We are members in the family of God. We do much better in fellowship with other believers in the church than we do alone. We were never meant to grow alone. Make worship and fellowship with fellow believers a part of your downtime – it was the routine and custom of Jesus and the command of the apostles to those who would follow Him.



These simple devotional goals for your downtime will keep you in spiritual shape and ensure that you will not have to start over from ground zero once summer, vacation and your downtime ends. In fact you may see dramatic life and spiritual breakthroughs once your regular routine resumes, because you have used your break well!

Enjoy,

Pastor Kelley

WHAT'S ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND??

Jan Burt has suggested doing book reviews by different members of LOCC for the newsletter. If you have a great book that you would like to answer a few questions for, please see Jan. This month, we will begin with Tony and Jan and take a look at their nightstand to see what they have been reading.

1. What are you reading?

- Tony - "Still Growing - An Autobiography" by Kirk Cameron
- Jan - "Fast Food Nation - The Dark Side of the All-American Meal" by Eric Schlosser

2. What do you like about this book?

- Tony - Since taking a "Way of the Master" course, I've had an interest in Kirk Cameron. I was surprised to learn he gave his life to Christ while he was still a teenager working on "Growing Pains".
- Jan - It certainly has opened my eyes to the enormous amount of work it takes to support the typical American way of eating. A "value meal" might be cheap, but the real price is much greater than a few bucks.



3. What do you dislike about this book?

- Tony - I've learned that child-actors don't always grow up to be "mature" adults!
- Jan - It has a liberal slant, but nothing a Christian can't see through.

4. Would you be willing to loan this book to other LOCC members to read?

We would loan out either of these books to anyone who would like to read them.



Gary Varvel
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Happy
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