

“Ahhhh....The Art of Relaxation”

I've been thinking about the art of relaxation. Last week I was walking through a camp ground about 2pm on a Monday. It was hot and humid, the black flies were biting and the air was as still as frog's hair. Passing a camper I noticed a gentleman sitting in a lawn chair with his head tilted back, arms folded in front of him and his body totally relaxed (no, he wasn't dead). What a strange phenomenon, I thought. When was the last time you saw that?? Just straight out, full-blown, total relaxation. It looked so inviting, yet very odd. And he was even in the right place, a campground and on vacation.

In today's world it almost appears to be against the law when someone asks how have you been not to respond, "I am so busy!!!" It matters little your profession or whether you are working full-time, part-time or even retired..... The response is almost always the same. Would you be impressed with someone that said, "You know, life is good. Why just today I sat for two full hours and did absolutely nothing, why, I don't even think I had one thought!" ?

So, I ask myself, how do we get back in to the art of relaxation and just being still. It really does feel as though it has become somewhat of a lost art. And it is interesting that many people have been talking a lot about this lately, especially since 911. There seems to be a refocus around getting back to the simpler things in life. Why just a couple weeks ago at church our priest insisted that we take a day to do just nothing (okay so he did mention something about prayer)! So we even have permission now.

I guess we have to remind ourselves what it does mean to relax!. Webster's says it is to refrain from work or effort. Calvin and Hobbes, from the comics provide for us good role modeling for relaxation. Calvin is watching his mother dig in the garden and he says, "I don't have anything to do." Mom, of course says, "Well then why don't you go clean your room." Calvin comments, "I was bragging." Isn't that great! And there is always Garfield (or really any cat for that matter) who I am certain has written the how-to book on spending time nestled into a soft couch, a lap, the grass wherever there is comfort.

So, yes, it is time to refrain from work and effort. At least for a little bit. Walk barefoot in the grass, watch the clouds float by and say, "well that looks like an elephant...", pick dandelions and make crowns, eat a rootbeer popsicle, catch fire-flies and light up your hands, sit by a campfire and sing "She'll be coming around the mountain when she comes", read that book, walk through the library, ride your bike, smell fresh-cut hay, get an ice cream cone and sit on the street corner and eat it, or find a lawn chair....lay back, cross your arms on your chest and just hang.....

"Work is not always required...there is such a thing as sacred idleness, the cultivation of which is now fearfully neglected." I found this quote by George Macdonald in one of my favorite books, "Simple Abundance". I really have no idea who George is, but I like what he had to say. We must see this idleness as sacred and do everything we can to protect it. Start now! There is no time better than the present. If you need some help with relaxation ideas give me a call....I'm pretty good at it ☺ (That's what my beloved tells me)