

## A MUCH-NEEDED BREAK

School is out for another summer. I know kids and teachers enjoy having this break, but as a parent, so do I. For the next two months I am going to enjoy having a break from:

- trying to wake a teenager up at 7:00 a.m. each morning,
- trying to figure out what different things I can include in her lunch each day for school,
- making sure any books or binders brought home the day before get put back into her backpack for school that day,
- trying to get out the door each morning by 8:35 and then navigating through the busy traffic on the Lorne Bridge and Brant Avenue in order to get my daughter to school before the bell rings,
- stopping what I am doing at 2:30 p.m. each weekday to make the same trek across the Lorne Bridge and Brant Ave. to pick her up at day's end and then navigate through heavier traffic heading home.

I do not begrudge or mind in the least doing these things for my daughter during a school year, but as a parent it is nice to have a break from these weekday routines, just as it is for the students and teachers.

Summer is a time when we look forward to some much-needed rest and breaks from our normal routines. Just as it is nice to get a break from the routines of school during summer, we also look forward at this time of year to travel and vacation in order to get away from the realities of day-to-day life. Perhaps you still remember some of your summer vacations that provided you with this opportunity for rest.

Growing up, many of our family vacations would be spent staying at a motel in Niagara Falls. Even though we were not far from home on these vacations I still enjoyed doing different things like swimming in the motel pool, eating out at restaurants, playing mini-golf, going to some of the museums, or visiting the Skyline tower where they had bumper cars.

My wife Nadine and I have spent some of our summer vacations traveling through the maritime and western provinces of Canada, seeing parts of England and Germany, staying in resorts up north, and exploring parts of the

United States. Each vacation provided us with a much-needed break from the routines of day-to-day life. I imagine many of us have similar memories of vacations we experienced in order to get a much-needed break from our normal routines.

For some people the summer break includes a rest from church and worship. While some believers may make this a routine during the summer months, thankfully God does not take these kinds of breaks from us. One passage of Scripture I often read that reminds me how God is always working and never takes a break from watching over us is found in **Psalm 121**. The Psalm starts off with the writer asking the question, "**Where does my help come from?**" After looking up at the mountains, the writer concludes, "**My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth!**" The writer then acknowledges the following attributes about God's help, care, and love:

**He will not let you stumble; the one who watches over you will not slumber. Indeed, He who watches over Israel never slumbers or sleeps. The Lord Himself watches over you! The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade. The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon at night. The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever.**

It is truly amazing to see here how God never takes a break from watching over us. There is such comfort and assurance for us knowing that God is constantly watching over our lives and intervening in ways that we may not be aware of in order to protect us and allow us to avoid being harmed. Just as we acknowledge our need and desire for God not to take a break when it comes to watching over our lives, may we also ensure we do not take a vacation over the summer months when it comes to recognizing our need for Him.

As I mentioned earlier it can be a tendency on our part during the summer months to take a break from coming to church and worshipping Him. We may think we need a rest from worship in order to be refreshed. The purpose of the Sabbath when God created it has always been for these two purposes:

1. A time for refreshment and rest,
2. A time to remember God and what He has done.

If we take a pause during the summer months from worship, it may end up causing us to come away less refreshed, especially if we lose sight of our daily need for God and the spiritual food and replenishment that Sabbath worship provides us with. God created the Sabbath for our sakes so that we would not lose sight of how these balances of rest and remembrance are needed for faithful living. If travel during the summer happens to take us away from worshipping at our home church, then seize that opportunity to worship somewhere else. I have had many wonderful experiences during my summer vacations with Nadine on our travels worshipping at other churches. It has always proved refreshing for me spiritually and reminded me how blessed I am to have God watching over my steps, even on vacation.

It is nice to take a break during these summer months from some of our normal routines. God has not stopped His daily routine of watching over us. Let us not stop our routine of finding rest in God and remembering all He has done and continues to do for us.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean