

## Why I Rest on My Day Off and Mean No Offense by Doing So.

**Article Summary:** God commands one day a week rest. I have only one day a week to rest. That day is assigned to me by my employer. That is Saturday. I lost my health and was told by the doctors to “get my things in order” because “I will probably die.” I lost home, savings, retirement funds, rental property and job in 1991 and moved into a homeless shelter. All of this happened to me because I refused to take a day off and rest each week. Now I do. My health still suffers because of years of constant activity, and I am dangerously close to more physical problems if I do not rest. I spend most Saturdays in complete inactivity – real rest. Please do not be offended if I do not attend a Saturday activity/meeting. It isn't personal; it is necessary for me to maintain my health. Thank you.

**Clarification:** The human body is not designed for seven days a week work. Nor, is the human spirit or mind made for constant work. Mind, body and spirit need refreshment; down time, rest. One day in seven to rest is godly. During times of physical and mental rest we are best prepared to commune with God (Psalms 46:10). Nor, is a man meant to be away from his wife (or family) every day, all day long.

More than just work, I consider my profession a calling and I am blessed of God to have it. I love being involved in my church. I am not complaining a single bit because most of what I am doing, I enjoy tremendously. I am a church administrator. As an administrator it is right that I be at the church during

church office hours. That is when most administration occurs. I also serve as the church facilities manager, supervise the full time custodian, several volunteer maintenance personnel, a full time secretary, serve on the building and grounds committee, train Sunday greeters, fill in as an usher when needed, teach the Bible in my church, fill the pulpit when requested, spend eight hours a week driving back and forth to work/church, do outreach ministry every (or almost every) Tuesday night, attended every church service (Sun. AM, PM, and Wed. night), am the maintenance man for our church and the emergency contact liaison for our church in times of natural disasters (hurricanes). In addition, I serve as the first liaison between the church and church contract labor. I love and look forward to all of these duties.

In addition, I write books and try to get up at 5:30am each weekday morning to do that task. I seek to maintain my personal Bible study and devotion time. And, I do everything that everyone else does such as work in the yard, work on my vehicles to keep them running, try to devote a few quality minutes every week or so with my wife, clean out the garage, pay bills, and watch the news on television so I can stay at least one step ahead of the buffoon when it comes to a basic knowledge of current events. In addition, I advertise myself as an evangelist and keep my own records for the J. L. Collins Evangelistic Association and guest preach at every opportunity. My point is -- I am busy.

I was a senior pastor for 25 years. As a pastor, I could work on Saturday and select another day to rest. As a staff minister of a church I have been assigned Saturday and

Sunday off. However, Saturday is my only day to rest and my only full day to spend uninterrupted with my wife. Although Sunday is an "official" day off for me, Sunday is the most emotionally taxing and physically draining day for me; and this, for reasons that preachers, pastors and Sunday school teachers understand, but which cannot be explained to most others' satisfaction. I no longer try. I do not consider getting up, getting dressed, going to church on a deadline, listening to the message and the Sunday school presentation and dealing with the constant flood of thoughts that overwhelm my mind as a result of the 35 years of study of the Word of God (these thoughts triggered by what I am hearing), relating to church people as the Church administrator-facilities manager-maintenance man, supervisor of some, paying attention to guests that might be otherwise slighted, trying to remember everyone's name, insuring as a staff member that I say everything perfectly or as perfectly as I can, never walking by anyone without being posed to greet them or shake their hand, handling less than perfect comments made to me in a perfect manner, driving 37 miles back and forth to church every Sunday, eating Sunday afternoon in a local restaurant and always being ready to witness or greet those from church I see, and do whatever I do otherwise on Sunday (teach or preach) as a day of rest, even though I thoroughly enjoy doing all of these things and would feel slighted if any of these things were taken from me.

While Sunday is a designated day off for me, it is actually the most physically, emotionally, and spiritual draining day of my week. For me, Sunday is no day of rest! If I told my body it was a day of rest, my body would call me a liar, and justifiably.

The only way I can rest on Sunday is stay away from church.

I have one day of rest each week. That is Saturday. The value of the Old Testament Sabbath (Saturday) rest is that Old Testament people got one designated day off per week to rest. The disadvantage to being a Baptist is that most Baptists do not value (or value highly) the need for one day of rest each week. Most Baptists fill their day off with activity and call it rest because they do things that are "different", church work days, Sunday school outings, church outreach, yard work, bill paying, friend seeing, travel, sight seeing, or whatever. I used to be like that. That is, until I got deathly sick from overworking and overspending energy. In 1991, I lost my health, my home, my two rental properties, my car, my church (where I was pastor), my retirement account, my credit, moved into a men's homeless shelter in order to have a roof over my head while I rested over a period of 14 months to get my health back and moved my wife in with our kids and grandkids. I almost lost my life.

Now, when someone asks me to work, attend some function, do (or attend) a wedding or funeral, attend a church work day, meet for fellowship, or whatever, on a Saturday, I usually respectfully decline if at all possible. I often hurt other people's feelings when I decline, no matter how respectfully I do it. This is because, as a Baptist, it is uncommon, strange, even confusing to some and offensive to others, to say "I need a weekly day of rest."

I get up every weekday at 5:30am and do a brief devotion, and then work on my books until time to get ready for work. I come home most

days and work on my books for one to three hours each week night, depending on how tired I am. On average, I suspect I spend 12 to 15 hours a week writing/editing and have done at least that much for more than 13 consecutive years. I am 57 years old, and I have more miles and stress on me than most people my age. I won't go into detail, but 25 years as a pastor takes a toll. Plus, there are other factors, not of interest to you, I am sure. One factor most people will understand is that I love my wife and miss her when I am gone all day every day and some evenings. We need one day a week that is not spent on or structured around others so if we want to do something or spend time uninterrupted time together, it is possible.

After I work on my books 12 to 15 hours a week, fulfill my job related responsibilities and do my volunteer ministry at the church I have invested 65 to 80 hours of energy in work or work related effort. Now, when Saturday comes along, I am tired. I work very hard and by weeks end I am mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually weary.

I have two options. I can add to my weekly schedule activities on Saturday and not get any rest – thus, be tired the following week, struggle with interpersonal relationships (that is, when I am exhausted it is harder to properly relate to others), invest the energy seeking forgiveness for improperly relating to others, perform poorly the next week from exhaustion and endure the guilt for doing poorly (remember we all work for Jesus, and we should do a good job), and pray that nothing comes up the following Saturday (when you are willing to work seven days a week, somehow things come up seven days a week to work at most of the

time), and eventually get sick again, lose again my job, health, home, meager regained retirement and move into another homeless shelter while I try to recover my health, or I can say “no” to anything but rest on Saturday. I used to think that the grace of God would take me through the weeks that I did not rest. I have learned that is “tempting God.” We cannot knowingly violate the Word of God and then seek the grace of God to “see us through our disobedience in good stead.” Resting our bodies and minds one day out of seven is being obedient to God. Failing to do so is sin.

That does not mean I will never do anything on Saturday. I do what has to be done and if my job requires a Saturday investment, I comply with a godly attitude.

Other than mandatory (ox in the hole) job related requirements, the call to invest energy on Saturday has

to be a **BIG** deal

before I will get involved. It has to be big enough that I am willing to feel bad the following week, struggle for the coming week in my interpersonal relationships, chance getting sick, go without a day of rest for 13 consecutive days, and perform poorly the last seven of those 13 days. Spend a great deal of energy cleaning up the interpersonal and other involvements done poorly which includes asking forgiveness, redoing work already done, doing more work to correct problems and more. The “ox” has to be in the hole, if you know what I mean. I hope you understand. I mean no offense to anyone by resting on Saturday. It is just that I have paid a great price

for not resting one day a week in times past. When I was sick, homeless, and penniless it was hard to find a friend.

I cannot work, play, be on guard, perform or produce seven days a week without severe consequences sooner or later. I owe better to myself, my wife, my kids, and grandkids. And, I get so tired of the immediate consequences of being tired: dragging all week mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, and making mistakes in interpersonal relationships that upset me and others, and cause me to have to seek forgiveness from others I might be "short" with – when all of this could be avoided all of these negatives if I had just honored scripture and taken my day off to rest, and made that a commitment to myself.

Beyond this, I had my thyroid removed on October 31, 1991. Without out thyroid there is no reserve tank of energy from which to draw. When the end of energy comes, it is a brick wall. You stop! It is not a choice. It is a physical reality. I have found that if I work 7 days a week, soon afterwards I stop anyway. "He makes me lie down...."

When I was growing up, my father was part owner in a bowling center. One of our most frequent bowlers was E. A. Algers. "Ernie" loved to bowl, and he was good at it. He was a competitor at heart. He bowled several nights per week in several leagues. He bowled "pot games" (wagering money on his skill) after and before many league night games. He bowled about every tournament that our bowling center sponsored. However, in the four years my father was part owner or that bowling center Ernie never showed up at the bowling center on

a Sunday. NEVER. My father told me that "Ernie devoted Sunday to his wife." He spent the day with her; every Sunday, all day Sunday, no matter what.

I never saw Ernie on a Sunday. I never met his wife. She did not like to bowl, I guess. But, again – I never saw Ernie on Sunday either.

Once, Ernie entered a tournament that took place over several nights. Those that finished (won) in any of the top eight places on Wednesday evening, bowled on Thursday. Those that finished in the top six on Thursday evening, bowled on Friday. Those that finished in the top four on Friday evening, bowled on Saturday. The top two moved on to the championship (final) play-off game on Sunday evening. The winner of Sunday night won the tournament and the considerable cash prize. Ernie did not realize when he entered the tournament, that the top two competitors would have the championship game on Sunday. He paid his entry fee and started the tournament Wednesday evening. He finished in the top eight and moved to Thursday's competition. He finished in the top six on Thursday, the top four on Friday, and was one of the two who finished one and two on Saturday. Sunday came and the time for the championship play off came. Many people showed up to watch the play off. Ernie did not show up. He forfeited, because it was Sunday, and he devoted Sunday to his wife. Wow! I later learned that Ernie did not realize when he started the tournament that the final pay off game was on a Sunday.

I admired Ernie for his dedication. With less devotion but with admiration for Ernie who had more devotion to his wife than I have to my

health and to the biblical principle of a day of rest each week, I devote my day off to rest. I owe it to myself for the reasons already stated. I owe it to my wife. She needs a healthy husband at home not my bedside to attend or my funeral to plan.

Someone suggested, "Why don't you just not work on writing through the week? That way you will have more energy and can work hard or play hard on Saturday. Answer: My books are about Christ and His Church. As much as God has called me to do anything, He has called me to write. To give up writing would be an act of disobedience to my Lord. I cannot give up writing or even write less in order to not rest one day a week. It is not the work during the six days of labor that harms me; it is the seven days without a day of rest that harms me. In order to write, I have given up almost everything else that people do that consume their free energy and their free time. I no longer watch TV sports. I go to very few places outside of work and church. I spend precious little one to one time with my wife. Writing is part of my "calling." It is not an option. Writing demands sacrificial living. I have given up a great deal in order to be obedient to God's call in my life to write.

Unless I am asked to work on Saturday by my Pastor or have to expend energy to "get an ox out of a hole" I try to rest on Saturday because that is my only day I can rest. Most Saturdays I do not get out of my pajamas. I spend a great deal of every Saturday in bed. I hope no one finds that offensive. I really do not think it is a sin to rest one day a week. I am sure you do not either. I have found that I need it desperately. One day in seven for rest is no longer a luxury for me. It is a

necessity if I am going to do well the remaining six.

Being on church staff, I am expected to be an example of commitment. Church members are expected to work full time and serve the church much. Thus, as an example such is expected of me. I do that. This means that most of my time is scheduled and consumed. We have little time for social events or social outings. We have almost no time to interact with people, lost or saved, outside of the schedule of church life. I could do those things on Saturday if I were uncaring about my health.

Someone asked me, "What do you mean by 'rest?'" I mean, "Produce nothing and in the process expend no energy." For me, "rest" is "rest." For others, "rest" is a "change of location, a change of pace, a change of activity, or fun in the sun." I understand that. I used to be that way too. Not any more. Now, for rest, I rest. Rest for me is being a rest; it is as doing nothing but eat, sleep and relax. It is existence without motion. It is the rejection of activity to as near to zero as I can manage and the dismissal of work, play and social responsibility. It is space, quiet. It is just me and the whisper of God in the occasional presence of my wife. Thank God for my wife who understands that precious little of Saturday is devoted to her. It is quiet, silence, calm, repose, listening to my breath.

For most of my life every six months, or so, I would break out in uncontrollable and unexplainable tears that would last for two or three hours. I have learned that is the way my body handled my schedule of relentless day after day activity; a warning sign that I ignored until illness overcame me and with

prolonged illness came abject poverty; homelessness, loss of all savings and properties.

Sincerely,  
Joda L. Collins

I am not trying to get out of work. Those who have known me for six months or more know that I enjoy work and if I could I would work all of the time. As fact, I used to. I am not trying to avoid fellowship. I enjoy and need associations with others. I am starved for close fellowship most of the time but it is not worth my health to enjoy it. I am not trying to offend anyone by not attending a Saturday function or Saturday work days at the church. I have found that people who care about me, my marriage, my health, my relationship with God, and my performance as a minister seldom get offended when I take my one day off a week to rest.

I am not trying to belittle or minimize the importance of the events or activities others schedule on a Saturday. I am convinced I am missing much, and much that has value. I am simply trying to better guarantee that I am here for a few more healthy years to work more, fellowship more and to do those things more effectively and efficiently. I only shatter my health and bring death to my doorstep by expending energy in work and/or play seven days a week. Others can. I used to. I cannot, any more. I wish I had a viable alternative for one days rest in seven. If I had one, I would attend as many Saturday activities as I could. In addition, I would have several Saturday meetings of my own design that I would invite others to attend.

Please do not be offended if I do not expend energy in work or play on Saturday when it is possible for me to avoid that expenditure. It is not about you. It is all about me being obedient to what I have learned the hard way. I need a day of rest. I have come to believe that one day per week rest has a biblical basis. If that is true, then it is not about me at all, but all about God. As an employee of a church, I have been assigned Saturday off. Thank you for understanding when I take it to rest.