

It has been a number of years since my wife Danka and I visited several fellowships and home groups during a few days in Great Britain and shared things from our ministry. Our friendly guide was Don, then about sixty-five years old. One day we're coming back from a meeting late in the evening and I'm asking about the people we're supposed to meet tomorrow: what they do for a living, how we can best serve them, and so on. Don was answering my questions for a while, but then he paused and said quite urgently: "Pavel, just relax!" And then he elaborated on it for a while: "Thanks for a great evening! And how many deep personal conversations did you have in the afternoon? You've been going full speed all day! About tomorrow we'll talk in the morning after you get some sleep." At that moment I politely said nothing, but I was honestly angry with Don: I want to prepare as best as possible for tomorrow's ministry, pray as specifically as possible, and Don tells me: „just relax !“ – „Take a break!“

When we returned home from our trip, Danka and I would say to each other several times a day: „just relax!“ And in the following months we were learning to rest! We purposely created moments where we could do nothing! Both individually – personally, and with Danka as a couple, depending on how it was possible with regard to the ministry and the family. We are very active people! But now, in addition to diligent and action-oriented ministry, we learned to gratefully enjoy the presence of Jesus, solitude, each other, our children, and also gratefully look back at the fruit of God's grace. And with that, simply „do nothing else!“

On one hand, I see a lot (really a lot!) of statements by the apostle Paul and Peter in the style:

- ***Fight*** the good fight of faith! (1 Timothy 1:18; 6:12)
- ***Strive*** earnestly to stand before God as a proven man, a worker. (2 Timothy 2:15)
- Bear ***hardships*** with me. (2 Timothy 2,3)
- That is why we ***strive*** and ***struggle***. (1 Timothy 4:10)

And there are dozens of statements about **persecution** in which we are to persevere in faithful ministry. From this, at first glance, it may seem that Paul and Peter, and indeed even Jesus, were terribly „going after maximum performance“.

At the same time, the Apostle Paul and other wonderful servants knew how to **rest in Jesus**,

they knew how to **listen to Him**, they knew how to openly **discuss with Him their feelings**, hopes, fears, fatigue, disappointment. Right at the creation of the world, God established a **day of rest**, the observance of which he quite demanded from his people! He wanted them to focus on Him and **enjoy Him**. The Creator himself also rested properly and enjoyed his work! The

Lord Jesus is definitely looking for disciples who are willing to sacrifice anything for him! On the other hand, he doesn't want his disciples to be out of breath and sweaty all the time. On the contrary, he wants them to be healthy, strong, efficient! That is why he sometimes said to his disciples: „Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and **get some rest**.“ (Mark 6:31)

I have the impression that no one has ever taught us this: to enjoy being close to living Jesus, to rest in Him, to draw renewal and strength from Him. And this at the background of very diligent ministry or even sacrifice! If our heart and our ministry is anchored in Jesus, then it is not primarily about our performance, but above all about **His empowerment**, which we draw from His presence! Yes, the Lord Jesus wants our perseverance and other strong qualities. But these should result from our deep rest in Him! That is why Jesus often went to that mountain: to stay with the heavenly Father, to talk with Him, to be with Him. If in the midst of concentrated and intensive service we do not naturally seek and deeply experience the closeness of Jesus, all that is left of all the beautiful ministry is hard work and, as a result, even burnout... I don't know if you have noticed that here on the website bridgestopeople.net there is with many practical instructions and prompts, also a whole section with lessons in the style of:

- **D01 I Feed Myself with Your Closeness** (5:07)
- **D03. I Listen to Living Jesus** (5:43)
- **D04. How to keep the zeal** (5:34) – About rest, too.
- Also look at **E09. Rhythm of Joy** (5:57)

Lord Jesus, thank You that the empowerment for ministry that lies in Your presence is available to each of Your servants.