

Prayer

S E R V I C E



CATCH YOUR BREATH

CALL TO PRAYER

LEADER Jubilee challenges us to slow life down, to take some time for ourselves, our families, our friends, and our community. It challenges us to simplify our lives rather than living life on fast-forward. It calls us to be attentive to justice issues and to respond.

READING I

Lv 25:3-4

In Leviticus, God instructs the people upon entering the Promised Land.

Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in their yield; but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of complete rest for the land, a sabbath for God.

READING II

The land was given rest out of reverence. Even as jubilee teaches us to honor our relation to earth by letting it lie fallow, there is another land to which we must attend and to which we must pay similar reverence. This is the land of ourselves, the tiny country each of us comprises, whose geography we know so well. We are to let that land, the land of our bodies, our blood, our breath and our bones, lie fallow, too.

REFLECTION

If I knew for certain that God would take care of all my needs, the needs of family, friends, community, and this organization, I could rest from . . .

LEADER

Jubilee rest leads us to a deeper appreciation of the goodness of God, ourselves, each other, and all of creation. The Hebrew word for "rest" literally means to "catch your breath." Jubilee rest can occur on any day of the week. It calls us to reattune ourselves to the rhythms of the natural world and to our own bodies. It invites us to delight in the goodness of life and of the giver of that life. It teaches us to learn to live in the present, the fullness of time, with grateful hearts.

CLOSING PRAYER (alternate stanzas)

Slow us down, God. Ease the pounding of our hearts by the quieting of our minds. Steady our hurried pace with a vision of the eternal reach of time.

Give us, amid the confusion of the day, the calmness of the everlasting hills. Break the tensions of our nerves and muscles with the soothing music of the singing streams that live in our memories.

Help us know the magical, restoring power of sleep. Teach us the art of taking minute vacations—of slowing down to look at a flower, to chat with a friend, to pat a dog, to read a few lines from a good book.

Remind us each of the fable of the hare and the tortoise, that we might know that the race is not always to the swift—that there is more to life than increasing its speed. *Card. Richard Cushing, "Prayer to Achieve Inner Peace"*

ALL

Let us look upward into the branches of the towering oak and know that it grew great and strong because it grew slowly and well. Slow us down, God, and inspire us to send our roots deep into the soil of life's enduring values that we may grow toward the stars of our greater destiny. Amen.

SOURCES

Maria Harris, Proclaim Jubilee! A Spirituality for the Twenty-First Century, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, KY, 1996.

Tom Cordaro and Madelyn Gould, Jubilee Justice: The Times Call Us, Pax Christi USA, Erie, PA, 1999.

This prayer service focuses on the concept of jubilee rest, taking time to be present. You may use this service at meetings or on any occasion when you wish to take a moment to reflect on the mission of Jesus. Feel free to adapt the service to suit your own needs.

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