

Playing Hooky

Today I skipped church. No, I'm not out of town and, thankfully, I'm not sick, but basically I am worn down and worn out, mentally and physically whipped from a busy Advent and Christmas season, eight funerals in just a little over two weeks, and more things coming at me than I can handle at the moment. (Some of them will just have to wait, I imagine.) I needed a Sabbath.

I wish I could say that I realized that for myself, but it was the encouragement of my two colleagues in ministry who helped me see that and I am grateful. While preachers don't ordinarily have sabbaths on the Sabbath, this was a good day for me *not* to be at church. I had prepared the service (traditional Lessons and Carols), recruited readers, written the script for all to follow, and it was my colleague's Sunday to preach. So, I stayed home. That's right, I *stayed* home. It was "stay at home Sunday" or "worship at St. Mattress by the Springs Sunday." I leisurely perused the Sunday paper, played with my grandchildren who are visiting for a couple of days, napped, read, and tonight enjoyed the Nights of Lights train with the family.

I don't mind hard work and have always worked hard at my calling. For many years I worked six and one-half days a week. Only in later years did I realize that having a full day to one's self is an important thing to claim—important for yourself and important for others. I can't say that I always succeed at that, but it is my aim and I am a better person and pastor for it, I think. Even so, there are those times, and we all have them, when we need to stop for a bit, to breathe deeply, to allow body and soul to rest, and to reassess and reprioritize things. Today was a step-back day in my life and I am grateful to have had it. Take them in yours when you can. You will be better for them and so will others. Grace and peace be with you.