



Rev. Dr. Tommy Goode
 Church Growth and Health Consultant
www.mid-america-disciples.org/available-consultants
tommywgoode@gmail.com
 417.860.3471 (voice/text)

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“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

Matthew 11:29-30 (MSG)

I recently told someone that I get burned out on church... to be clear... I get burned out on institutional religion. I saw where a prominent religious commentator recently posted that “anything institutionalized eventually gets corrupted.” I guess that’s kind of what I mean. It takes personal and organizational renewal to prevent such regrettable outcomes. It would appear that even Jesus weighed-in on this... see the text above.

It isn’t uncommon these days to hear people (good, hard-working, Jesus-lovin, faithful people) talk about being tired/burned-out. In fact, burnout and emotional fatigue are at epidemic levels among persons across many professional categories, especially those in the people-helping professions. So, when I hear church folk talk about being tired and burned out – I try and listen with understanding and compassion (I can identify).

I’m not talking about those who are upset ‘cause they don’t get their way, or just got up on the grumpy side of the bed that day, or just that’s their way. I’m talking about those who show up, give, do, help, serve, participate.

So, what to do? That’s the question. Apart from good wellness practices focused on mind, body, and emotions... we must develop spiritual renewal practices too. I am reminded of an old church hymn titled “There is fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel’s veins” with the following lyrics... (translated “focus on Jesus” or something like that).

*E’er since by faith I saw the stream
 Thy flowing wounds supply,
 Redeeming love has been my theme,
 And shall be till I die:
 And shall be till I die,
 And shall be till I die;
 Redeeming love has been my theme,
 And shall be till I die.*

*When this poor lispng, stammering
 tongue
 Lies silent in the grave,
 Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
 I’ll sing Thy power to save:
 I’ll sing Thy power to save,
 I’ll sing Thy power to save;
 Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
 I’ll sing Thy power to save.*

Spiritual renewal is centered in our faith relationship with Jesus, and within our relationships with others on the faith journey. Let’s love each other, support each other, care for each other, encourage each other, pray for each other, listen to each other, confess to each other, help each other in every way that we can for as long as we can. After all, we’re in it together!

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