

JUNE
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A PUBLICATION OF ROYSTON BAPTIST CHURCH

life together

We Need a Vacation!

Summer is upon us - which means *see ya later, school* and *hello, heat and humidity* - it's you again! It also means that it's time for a VACATION!!!

Whether relaxing at familiar places like the beach house that has been your family's week-long home for decades each summer, or loading up the camper for adventures to new destinations, summer vacations provide lifelong memories and loads of fun. Vacations are a much-needed break from work and school. By the time summer vacation rolls around we are exhausted and irritable. We need these breaks from the routine so that we can hit the reset button and recalibrate our rhythms.

It seems to always happen this way. We go 90-miles-a-minute all year long, only to stumble our way into vacation because we are just so tired. Why do we do this to ourselves? Summer vacations are great, but why do we wait until they roll around to finally stop and rest? Isn't there a better way?

"You and your family are to remember the Sabbath Day; set it apart, and keep it holy. You have six days to do all your work, but the seventh day is to be different; it is the Sabbath of the Eternal your God. Keep it holy by not doing any work ... For the Eternal made the heavens above, the earth below, the seas, and all the creatures in them in six days. Then, on the seventh day, He rested. That is why He blessed the Sabbath Day and made it sacred."

- Exodus 20:8-11 (The Voice Translation)

It seems like there *is* a better way - the sabbath way - God's way.

I hope you will join us for worship every week this summer for VACATION - or as God calls it, sabbath - as we follow Jesus who knew a few things about how to live and rest well.

Shalom!

William

June 16th

We Need a Vacation
Deuteronomy 5:6,12 & Mark
2:23-28

June 23rd

Where Are We Going?
John 14:1-7, 15-21

June 30th

How Do We Get There?
John 1:35-51

July 7th

Sandcastles & Lighthouses
Luke 6:46-49

July 14th

Jesus Goes to Church Camp
Luke 2:41-52

July 21st

Sara Freeman Preaching
John 15:1-17

July 28th

It's a Great Day for a Picnic
John 6:1-15

August 4th

Sunglasses & Sunscreen
John 1:1-14, 8:12

August 11th

*We'll Leave the Light
on for You*
Matthew 5:14-16

August 18th

Swim at Your Own Risk
Matthew 14:22-33

August 25th

Unpacking the Suitcase
Matthew 11:28-30



GOD-SIZED ADVENTURES BY DEBORAH HERRING

Ah, summer! I absolutely love it because most of the activities I enjoy the most are centered around the great outdoors. I could live outside! Summertime makes me feel like a kid again and I don't have to travel to find something to occupy my time whether it be gardening, running, swimming, biking, hiking, kayaking, water skiing, fishing, bird watching, or exploring. I am happiest when I see the grandeur of God's creation and can play under the sky-blue canopy until the moon appears and even then, I seldom want to go inside. I'd rather feel the warm breeze on my skin and gaze at the stars and planets. I've traveled my whole life and explored many different states, countries, and islands. I've always loved the mountains, my favorite being the Wind River Range and Grand Teton Mountains in

Wyoming, but recently some of my favorite vacation experiences have been scuba diving with my husband, John. I never dreamed that anything could be more exciting than exploring mountain trails, lakes, streams, and vistas, but I found an entirely different experience under the sea. It made me realize just how awesome God is. He purposely designed each coral reef, fish, and sea creature uniquely and there is an inexhaustible supply of variation that I could never



Deborah and John snorkeling in Bonaire.

fully see even if I were to dedicate every vacation for the rest of my life in this pursuit. Deep in our spirits God created in us a need for "awe." It is in these new discoveries that we see His handprint and truly begin to see the vastness of the Creator's handiwork. The best part of any vacation in my life has been discovering with my family and friends just how big God is by seeing the signs of His personal, ever-present care. He is never far from us however far we travel. Psalm 139: 8-10 says, "If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast." Let's get together and share how we were awed by God this summer in our adventures!

WARMTH OF SUMMER BY SARA FREEMAN

Thank the Lord summer is finally here!!! If I could use all of the exclamation points in all of the world to express the excitement I feel toward warm weather, fireflies, homemade ice cream, and Vacation Bible School, I definitely would. Cold weather and I are not very good friends, so when summer finally rolls around, I embrace her and catch up like she's a distant

cousin who has walked up through my front door after months away, pulling off her floppy beach hat and slipping out of her strappy-sandals. She smiles her warm smile and I can't help but to keep a grin on my face and be thankful she decided to stay for a while. I always love to watch her roll into town and dread the moment she leaves.

Summertime has always been accentuated by time spent with my family, whether that is taking a trip to the mountains, spending the week at the beach, or (continued on pg. 3) even catching every single summer movie we can. Regardless of the activity, I can always rest assured that the warmth of the season will spread through my

house and push us out into wide open spaces.

Summer is a time of reflection, rest, and retreat, things that we scarcely make time for during any other months of the year. It's during these times of sitting still that the Lord reminds me of where I've been and the beauty of waiting to see where He is going to lead me next. It's in the midst of these months when the Lord mirrors His desire to gently usher me outside, into the wilds of His heart where only warmth toward me resides, in the same way that I long to retreat into the warmth of summer.

While seasons in my spiritual life often reflect these majestic

heat-filled months, where the Lord has pushed me to leave my cocoon of simulated comfort and into the world of inviting adventure, there have also been times that shame, guilt, or just plain laziness have sent me retreating inward (similar to when I tend to hide away inside my home any month where the temperature is below 40 degrees). During these wintry spiritual moments, I find solace in anything but my Savior, running to puny gods who can hold my attention for a moment, but always seem to leave me in want.

It takes the Lord whispering to me from outside the home where my heart resides. Whis-

pering memories of His love, His goodness, and His mercy, the very things sent me on this wild ride to begin with, that ultimately sends me running to the door of my heart, throwing it wide open and breathing deep. Summer always reminds me that while I had been hiding away, Jesus never stops waiting, pursuing, and gently calling me to step outside and trust that His adventure is always worth taking a chance on.



Sunset in St. Simon's Island from one of Sara's recent vacations.

CASWELL SKY BY MARY KATE DEAL

I spent 10 or 11 of my childhood and youth summers going with my church to Music Week at Fort Caswell, sponsored by the NC Baptist Assembly. It was a week-long camp filled with worship, choir and handbell rehearsals, fort exploring, and beach lazing. I would count down the days to Caswell as



Oak Island Light House from Ft. Caswell

soon as the final bell rang on my last day of school. It would always fall around the 4th of July, so we would get to watch Southport, NC's fireworks show on the pier with all of our new and old friends. It was at Caswell that I felt a call to become a music teacher—to take the passion I had for music and hopefully teach students to feel the same. I have so many fond memories from these trips, but none quite so fond as the "Caswell Sky" - a night sky so dark that every star is visible and shines with breathtaking brightness.

This was one of the things I looked forward to most every year. Of course this can happen anywhere that light pollution hasn't effected, but even then, I call it a "Caswell Sky." Looking up at the vast expanse of darkness makes me feel both insignificant and essential—that God would choose to create me to help further the Kingdom here on this huge world floating in space with the stars and comets an moons is empowering. My only prayer is to do the job in such a way that others see only God's starlight shining in me.

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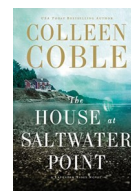
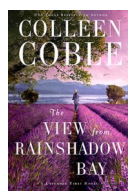


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