

Summer Sabbath Resources for Adults

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"Loving Others for Who They Are"

Bible Text: Please read Philippians 2:1-4 aloud from your favorite translation.

Devotional Thought

"Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others." Jesus envisioned a better world, where all people are valued for who they are, not for what they can do or have. He modeled this kind of behavior, never setting himself above anyone else.

My wife's mother, Pauline Hodges, was such a person. If we gave her a gift of money, she passed it on to someone more in need. The beautiful gifts her children gave her made their way to the sick and forgotten in the neighborhood. After raising a large family of her own, she taught the children of the church in Sunday School. She quietly went about her way, baking cornbread as a special treat for someone who needed a friend, fixing the net of a fisherman down on his luck, hemming a pair of pants for a man whose

wife had left him, making pine needle baskets for children's birthday presents, serving others the best pieces of the chicken...the list goes on. No one had any idea how vast her service to others was until her funeral when people from all economic groups stood up and testified to how "Granny Hodges" had contributed to their lives. Part of her estate was a treasured collection of hundreds of postcards I sent her from various travel destinations. I learned that she regularly pulled these postcards out and proudly showed them to anyone who would take the time to look.

Reflecting on these precious memories of my mother-in-law, I realize that I was not the only one

who relished being in her presence. Living alone, she was barely ever by herself. Her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren, friends, and neighbors could be found sitting next to Granny as she crocheted another potholder, fashioned another basket, or shelled a mess of peas. Non-judgmental and forgiving, she listened attentively and did not live "on the outs" with anyone. Her church celebrated her once a year at homecoming, which they fondly called "Granny Hodges Day," in honor of her years of service and her status as the only remaining charter member. Granny literally did nothing from selfish ambition or conceit. She did not look to her own interests, but to the interests of others.

An Invitation to Prayer

Pray that we will model the concern of Jesus for others' wellbeing.

An Invitation to Service

Look back through the description of actions that Granny Hodges took on behalf of others, and choose one that resonates with your own gifts. Make a pledge to use this gift for the benefit of someone you come in contact with during the next week.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

In what ways am I still trying to prove myself,

rather than simply accepting the grace of God in my life?

How can the church lead us in following more closely the example of Jesus?