

In response to all of the great ministry the apostles reported, Jesus does not say: "Great – now here is your next task...", but "Come away by yourselves and rest a while.". As invigorating and exciting as all of their ministry efforts have been, Jesus challenges them to "set them down/put them aside" for a while (not forever, their work is not over and there is certainly more to do and it will still be there when they return) --- but he wants them to be renewed, re-energized for whatever the next ministry challenges will be.

Essentially, Jesus is reminding them that periodic rest is not a luxury but a necessity if they really want to be responsive to the needs of others --- and he practiced what he preached, often and regularly going off by himself to be refreshed in quiet, prayerful communion with the Father so that he could then do what was described in the passage --- respond to the needs of the vast crowd who were like sheep without a shepherd!

What great and valuable message for us to hear too --- in a 24/7 culture, "un-plugging" from the social media, web, email is important to do --- even though it is hard to do! (It is for me!!) Frenetic, non-stop activity/work is just not good for us in the long term --- the cumulative effect of high levels of stress, inadequate sleep, poor eating habits are known to lead to any number of real, physical problems ... and to real spiritual problems, too!