

terrifying (continued from page 3)

shame. Fear that it was all too much for God. Fear that I wasn't worthy of love. Fear that God doesn't work everything out for the good of those who love Him, and my life would fall apart if I stopped working. For all my life, fear has kept me running and hiding, living as though everything depended on me. And yet, all along, God has offered something greater.

As I walked the painful journey of facing these fears, I found that God longs to offer His perfect love to me in the place of fear. He wants me to find freedom and confidence in Christ, to experience His great delight in who He created me to be—not in what I do. Through His provision, I can be more present and live more wholeheartedly in every area of my life. I can trust His powerful work on the cross. And He promises that these gifts are available to us always, that we can drink deeply from the spring of living water and be restored, if only we would carve out enough space for Him to work.

So ... how did I end up here again?

I'm learning that to choose rest and create margin in my life will always be a battle. My flesh will always be pulled toward living out of fear, living as though my life, my worth, and my work all depend on me. But my soul has tasted and seen that the Lord is good. My soul longs for rhythms of rest and margin. This will always be an intentional act of obedience, a display of trust in the Lord. To say no to some of the many good things is to say yes to something greater—to yield to God's sovereignty and goodness, to rest at the feet of Jesus, and to enjoy His presence and be transformed.

In light of the past 73 days, perhaps I *should* be the last person in the universe to write about rest and margin. However, I'm grateful to walk with a God who celebrates progress and not perfection. ◀

### Measuring Margin

#### Margin Assessment #1: Emotional Energy

Respond to each of the statements on a scale of 1-3.

1 = Never    2 = Sometimes    3 = Always

- \_\_\_ 1. I have a network of close friends.
- \_\_\_ 2. I have reconciled relationships.
- \_\_\_ 3. I spend time meeting the needs of others.
- \_\_\_ 4. I usually sleep well.
- \_\_\_ 5. I enjoy and participate in humor with others.
- \_\_\_ 6. I say "no" to some opportunities.
- \_\_\_ 7. I have an attitude of thankfulness.
- \_\_\_ 8. I am adaptable to changing situations.
- \_\_\_ 9. I easily make routine decisions.
- \_\_\_ 10. I am patient with those who disagree with me.

\_\_\_ TOTAL

#### Score

- 10-16 = No margin - major adjustments need to be made
- 17-23 = Some margin - some adjustments need to be made
- 24-30 = Adequate margin

This assessment is the first of four, available by scanning this QR code with your smart phone, or at [www.sdcresourcehub.org/care](http://www.sdcresourcehub.org/care) under Printable Resources.



### development opportunities

August 17-19, 2018  
**Becoming One Retreat**

September 14, 2018  
**Prepare and Enrich**

October 2018 (tbd)  
**Soul Care Retreat**

October 1-5, 2018  
**StrengthsFinder Training**

October 2-5, 2018  
**ShepNet Gathering**

October 29-30, 2018  
**Supervisor Training**

October 30-31, 2018  
**NavRep Gathering**

For more information, call  
719-594-2555 or email  
[SDC@Navigators.org](mailto:SDC@Navigators.org)



*Upfront* is the newsletter ministry of The Navigators Staff Development and Care Team. ©2018 The Navigators, P.O. Box 6000, Colorado Springs, CO 80934. (719) 594-2555. Laurie Besonen, Director of SDC. Lyndi Markus, managing editor and designer (lmarkus@openworldcommunications.net). Jill Brown, editor. All Scripture quotations from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise indicated.

# upfront

Summer 2018 • Volume 12, Issue 2

Real Talk about Real Stuff for Navigators and Our Friends

## rebuilding the ancient ruins

by Ben Courtemanche

Collegiate Regional Director, The Northeast Navigators



*And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in. (Isaiah 58:12 ESV)*

*These physical buildings reflect the state of many people as well. They've drifted from God and replaced Him with something else.*

The northeast, where I grew up, has many "ancient ruins" among the towns and cities. Historic church buildings that once oriented people around the worship of God are now community centers or libraries. The celebration of God and His primacy for human flourishing are long forgotten or seen as quaint sentimentality.

These physical buildings reflect the state of many people as well. They've drifted from God and replaced Him with something else.

The declaration of Isaiah 58:12 has been meaningful to me as I've sought to minister in this post-Christian place. Somehow, God will rebuild ancient ruins—both people and places. And somehow, He wants to use me as part of doing that. So I've prayed—pleaded—and worked. I've sought to obey the conditions given in Isaiah 58's promises, which orient my activities around Kingdom values and practices. I've tried to "pour [myself] out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted" (verse 10) on campus and among my neighbors.

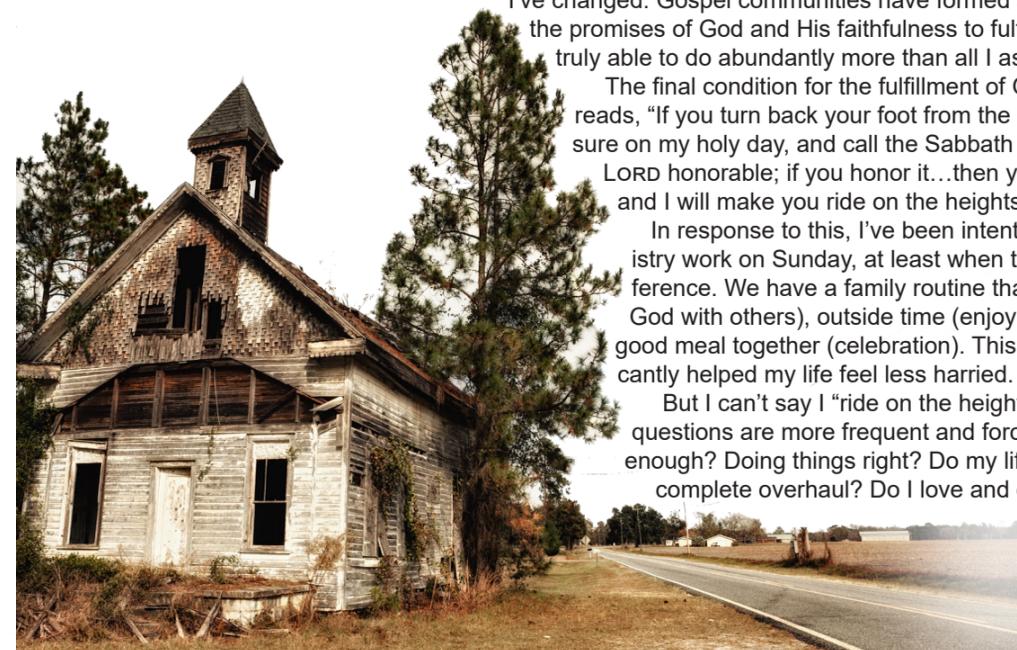
The Lord has done some marvelous things in response. People have changed. I've changed. Gospel communities have formed and begun to grow. My trust in the promises of God and His faithfulness to fulfill them has increased. He is truly able to do abundantly more than all I ask or imagine.

The final condition for the fulfillment of God's promises in Isaiah 58 reads, "If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it...then you will take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth..." (vs. 13-14, ESV).

In response to this, I've been intentional about not engaging in ministry work on Sunday, at least when there is no staff retreat or conference. We have a family routine that includes church (worshipping God with others), outside time (enjoying God in His creation) and a good meal together (celebration). This weekly commitment has significantly helped my life feel less harried.

But I can't say I "ride on the heights of the earth." Sometimes, hard questions are more frequent and forceful than I'd prefer. Am I doing enough? Doing things right? Do my life and ministry need a complete overhaul? Do I love and enjoy God, or just work for Him?

Do I have a sense of self that transcends this contribution? Do I like who I'm becoming? Can I sustain this for the long term? Is this really what I



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## hitting the space bar

by Laurie Besonen  
Executive Director,  
Staff Development and Care



What keeps you from resting? From setting healthy rhythms? Who are you still trying to please?

Asking these questions kept me in the ministry after years of over-extending myself.

After 16 years serving on campus and as a regional director, I went to seminary with an uncommon question: “Am I tired *in* ministry or *of* ministry?”

Turns out that the pace of ministry that I’d perpetually lived in was simply unsustainable. Spiritual disciplines like sabbath, silent retreats, and increased times of listening to God breathed new life and passion into my then-dry bones. What a gift to receive through the grace of rest and margin!

Brené Brown writes in *The Gifts of Imperfection*, “If we want to live a wholehearted life, we have to become intentional about cultivating rest and play, and about letting go of exhaustion as a status symbol and productivity as self-worth.”

Rest and margin can lead us to intimacy with God because we stop long enough to see His loving attention to every detail of our lives. Cultivating rest and margin also attunes us to our own hearts, our needs, our vulnerabilities. Psalm 68:19 tells us we have a God who daily bears our burdens.

Hitting the “space bar” in life allows repressed anger, grief, and even joy to surface so that it can be processed in a life-giving way. This *Upfront* discusses the way God chooses to enter into our “busy” and provide a space of peace. ◀



rebuilding (continued from page 1)

was made to do? Is this what God is asking me to do?

Monday can be the hardest day of all. My mind races: “Has the sabbath really done its work? Did I do it wrong? Why can’t I seem to find the rest my soul seeks?”

At the heart of the wrestling is a deep desire to be faithful to God and do whatever He asks of me. The temptation to just press on in the name of “not growing weary in doing good” is always close at hand. Yet I’ve learned to pay attention when these feelings and questions surface. They often mean the Lord is stirring up something, and I don’t want to miss it.

What He’s stirring up here is the necessity of a sabbath rhythm—not just a sabbath break. Sunday must define and recalibrate the other six days of the week. It can’t just be the conclusion to them that I collapse into. On Sunday, I’m reminded of the King and His Kingdom as I worship Him with others. He is God. I am not. I experience my appropriate insignificance, since the world keeps moving despite my stopping. I am permitted to slow down, recover, and celebrate.

But to live in the reality of the good news of the Kingdom means allowing God to be God every day of the week. He will advance His Kingdom and rebuild His ancient ruins. He will repair the breach. If I’m consistently worn out from ministry by Sunday (physically, emotionally, or spiritually), I might be missing the point. Perhaps I am the ancient ruin or breached city Jesus wants to rebuild. Perhaps this is the sin that so easily entangles, echoing forward from the Garden—a desire to be God.

In pursuit of repentance, I’ve found it helpful to arrange my week around concepts: **work, play, rest**. To me, this is good stewardship of the personhood God has entrusted to me.

- I need to **work**—intentionally, faithfully, consistently—in response to the call of God. I want to invest the gifts and time He gives me in loving service to Him and others. I want to be a laborer in His Kingdom, and I experience His joy and my best design as I work this way.
- I need to **play**—intentionally, faithfully, consistently—because this helps me to stop working, cease striving, and take myself less seriously. Playfulness allows my mind and heart to calm. It helps me learn to enjoy myself and others, pursue hobbies, and laugh. Play helps me do something “unproductive” and receive the blessing of God like a child.
- I need to **rest**—intentionally, faithfully, consistently—as a way to care for my mind, body, and soul. When rested, I can be present to God and others, and operate out of the strength He provides. Rest and my need for it is an acute reminder of the boundary lines God has created. I steward myself by living within them.

I still long to see the ancient ruins rebuilt and the breached places restored, and I count it a privilege to join God in this work. I am learning to pursue this through the avenue of a sabbath rhythm that keeps me at His pace, where He is God and I am not. ◀

*It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night; ...for God gives rest to his loved ones.*

(Psalm 127:2, NLT)

## why rest is terrifying



by Alice Matagora  
LDI Leadership Team, Staff Development and Care  
Co-Director at UC Irvine, Collegiate

“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?” Mark 8:36 (NASB)

I should be the last person in the universe to write about rest and margin.

Of the last 73 days, I’ve spent 40 traveling to 12 different cities for 13 different events, presenting at 9. All this while co-leading a campus ministry, discipling three women, and serving with the Cultural Development team, Asian American Network leadership team, and Leader Development Initiative leadership team.

In the past, I would’ve worn these statistics and my exhaustion as a badge of honor. “Look how productive I am!” Since my sabbatical in 2016, I’m grateful to know better. And yet ... how did I end up here again?

Looking back, I was raised by two powerful cultural forces: scarcity and shame. Scarcity, this idea of “not enough”—not enough opportunities in the world, not having enough, not being enough, not enough to go around. And shame—the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging” (Brené Brown).

Every minute of my childhood was filled with activities to ensure that in a world with not enough, I would be among the best to have enough. My parents held love and acceptance just beyond arm’s reach, motivating me to keep working hard to earn their approval by securing one of few opportunities. Scarcity and shame worked hand in hand to breed an unhealthy work ethic and worldview, one in which the course of my life and my worthiness was dependent on how hard I worked. This had been the only reality for my parents as they grew up in Taiwan. It became mine as well.

Even after coming to faith in Christ, I continued to live out of the lie that my worth depended on my effort and performance. Though I had plenty of Bible knowledge and experience of God, without room for God to speak deeply to my soul, I grew all the more fearful that if I let up for even a moment everything would come crashing down. Rather than spending my sabbaths delighting in the Lord and experiencing His delight in me, I would be so physically exhausted, all I could do was sleep. When I recovered, I’d get back up and do it all over again. It was as natural as breathing to me.

In the fall of 2015, after living more than three decades of life with little rest and margin, I found myself severely burned out. I went on sabbatical. There, in the sanctuary of rest, I experienced life without striving for the first time. It was terrifying.

I spent the first month frantically crocheting a blanket. Not for enjoyment, but because this idea that my worthiness was tied to my production was so deeply ingrained in me that I couldn’t bear to be unproductive. With the accountability of my sabbatical team and the gentle invitation from the Lord, I finally began to yield to the “unforced rhythms of grace” offered by Jesus. I began to stop doing and simply be. I began to rest, and I began to rest in God.

It’s amazing what you’ll find when you stop long enough to look. Areas where sin and unforgiveness had hardened my heart began to surface, along with deep, age-old pain and shame. At the heart of it all was fear. Fear of being consumed in facing my sin, pain, and

terrifying (continued on back)

*At the heart of it all was fear. Fear of being consumed in facing my sin, pain, and shame.*

We hope you like our new look! *Upfront* is now a publication of **Staff Development and Care (SDC)**, a new department of The Navigators. We’ve recently retired the name People Resources Team, but the functions and people of PRT have not gone away, as you’ll see on our website ([www.SDCresourcehub.org](http://www.SDCresourcehub.org)).

Along with *Upfront*’s new look, Staff Development and Care will likely include more topics, like training and development, as well as care.

We’d love to hear from you! What feedback do you have for us? What hot topics are on your mind that you’d like to see us cover? Shoot us an email at [SDC@Navigators.org](mailto:SDC@Navigators.org). ◀