

## **Rest Periods for Officeholders – Amendments to the Winchester Diocesan Synod Motion moved by Archdeacon Mark and approved by Synod, 6 July 2024**

### **First Amendment**

*Insert after 'That this Synod...'*

*'recognising that*

- a) Sabbath, as a time to cease and to delight, is part of God's plan for humankind and for all creation and is modelled by God in Genesis 2.1-3*
- b) A weekly Sabbath rest is a life-giving gift of God and important for the wellbeing of all people*
- c) A day off spent catching up on necessary tasks is not a Sabbath day*

### **Second Amendment**

*Insert after 'any period of seven days, to include an uninterrupted...' the word 'Sabbath' (to read 'an uninterrupted Sabbath rest period of not less than 24 hours')*

## **SPEECH**

MARK IRELAND, ARCHDEACON OF BLACKBURN, 69

I very much welcome the purpose of this motion and want to support it. However the motion as it stands is rather secular in tone – it starts from the ever-increasing pressures on the clergy, rather than from the nature of God and his gift of Sabbath, which in Genesis, as Alison reminded us, is part of God's gift for all human beings.

My two amendments are I hope friendly amendments, designed to ground the motion in a little Gospel hope and some theology. I believe Sabbath is a gift of God in creation and a means of his grace.

The word Shabbat, usually translated as to cease, can also be translated as to delight. As John Mark Comer comments, It has this dual idea of stopping and also of joying in God and our lives in his world. The sabbath is an entire day set aside to follow God's example, to stop and to delight.'

Over the 40 years since I was ordained deacon I have always been quite firm about keeping a day off each week. I guess that's one reason I'm still here. Some of those days off have been wonderfully life-giving, walking with my wife in the countryside, delighting in God and his creation, pursuing hobbies that are fun, but I confess that too often my day off has been spent merely recovering from work and catching up on necessary chores.

That is why I warmly welcome the principle of this motion, that clergy need to set aside 36 hours a week off, so that they can take a full 24 hour Sabbath day to cease and to delight in God and his creation, and still have time to catch up on necessary household chores.

I have just had a month's sabbatical which has convinced me that Sabbath is not a matter of OT law, but a gift from the creator who knows how we are made, and wants human beings to rest alongside the whole of creation. Walter Bruggemann has written powerfully of Sabbath as resistance to our current addiction to consumption and to multi-tasking.

Sabbath is part of the Good News we proclaim, which our increasingly stressed 24/7 world needs to hear. As Jesus affirmed, 'The Sabbath was made for humankind.' Please support my amendments and help clergy enjoy the life-giving gift of a weekly day to stop and to delight, and to model for the world what it is to switch off and rest according to the Maker's design.