

Pastor's Corner

Ritual. I believe we are missing meaningful ritual in our culture, and we need to be intentional about creating ritual that can provide a reliable flow and rhythm to our lives. A ritual is an event that contains symbolic importance to the one participating in the event. Sometimes it's a onetime event and sometimes it's repeated annually (or however often one chooses). We have ritualized birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, retirement parties, holidays, weddings and funerals - but these are the "heavy hitter" moments of life. And they aren't enough. Too many of our "ordinary" days go by uncelebrated and, even, unnoticed. When we create a ritual it allows us to become mindful of how sacred that exact moment is. It helps us set a marker in that precise place -in-time and say, *"Here. Right here, something profound and important has happened/is happening in my life, and I honor it."* What it will look like is going to be different for each of us. It can be something as simple as having a cup of Earl Grey tea on the back porch every night around the time the fireflies make their appearance, or a daily walk in a place that touches your soul. Or a weekly date with your significant other to reconnect and recommit to the journey together. Maybe ten minutes of prayer or meditation every morning, or baking fresh bread/doing woodwork/writing a poem/playing with crayons...anything that helps you pay attention to the significance of being alive in that *exact moment*.

Last Saturday my family celebrated a really important ritual in our lives: my son graduated from a unique two-year program at the University of Central Missouri. These past two years he's been learning how to be independent and take on some life skills that have been a struggle to accomplish. And it's been an incredible blessing to him and to our family. So we celebrated it! It was a day of pride and gratitude and tears of joy. A blessing we could not have anticipated several years ago when, although he's an incredibly bright young man, school was tough and I was doing everything in my power to get him across the finish line of high school. He's planning to continue on with classes in order to get his computer programming degree, and he has so much good to offer this world. I wanted to lift this up because, even though it's a gigantic moment where we have set a marker and said "look what you accomplished!" it's also an opportunity to remember that every day we can learn and grow and become more fully the person God created us to be.

Let us create beauty, meaning and holiness in our daily lives by developing ritual. If we can prioritize these moments they can help transform our ordinary daily lives into a bountiful harvest of joy and gratitude. It takes work and intention, but it is possible. May you all have a blessed week.

Pastor Kara

