

# Readings

## Scripture

<sup>1</sup>I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

- Romans 12:1-2 (*English Standard Version*)

## Reflection

There is a profound connection between the sleep we get in our beds each night and the sacramental rest we know each Sunday in our gathered worship. Both gathered worship and our sleep habits profess our loves, our trusts, and our limits. Both involve discipline and ritual. Both require that we cease relying on our own effort and activity and lean on God for his sufficiency. Both expose our vulnerability. Both restore.

- Tish Harrison Warren, *Liturgy of the Ordinary: Sacred Practices in Everyday Life* (p. 141-142)

“It is easy to imagine that the next great division of the world will be between people who wish to live as creatures and people who wish to live as machines.”  
- Wendell Berry

“The Hebrew evening/morning sequence conditions us to the rhythms of grace. We go to sleep and God begins his work.”  
- Eugene Peterson

“We habitually suppose ourselves to be more the masters of our spiritual development than we actually are...If some of the processes that are necessary for our physical well-being go on more advantageously in sleep than in waking life, because the will relaxes its too despotic control, why should not the same be true of some of the processes that advance our spiritual well-being?”  
- Scottish Pastor – John Baillie

# Sermon Outline

**Sleeping...**  
Romans 12:1-2

*Offering Your Ordinary Life to God*  
Matt Esswein

## The Lord Gives to His Beloved Sleep

**Sleep is a Gift from God** (Psalm 127:1-2)

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**Sleep is a Struggle for us**

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**Our Sleep Habits Reveal...**

- Our Loves
  - Our Limits
  - Our Trusts
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**Sleep is an act of Trust in the Lord** (Psalm 3:5; 4:8)

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**We Can Sleep because we have a Lord...**

- Who never sleeps (Psalm 121:4)
  - Who invites us to Rest (Matthew 11:28-30)
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**Reflection Questions** (*taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups*)

- What struck you from the text(s) or sermon this week? What questions, thoughts or insights do you have?
- What has been your relationship to sleep recently? Throughout your life?
- What keeps you from falling asleep at night?
- Why can it be hard for us in our lives today to sleep or rest well?
- How do our sleep habits show what we truly love or trust?
- Why is going to sleep an act of trust in the Lord?
- How is it encouraging to us that we have a God who never sleeps?
- What might it look like for you over the next days and weeks to practice healthy rest and sleep habits?
- What if Christians were known as a countercultural community of the well-rested—people who embrace our limits with zest and even joy?
- Try taking a nap or going to bed early this week while reflecting on God's trustworthiness. Tell someone next week what the experience was like.