

# Christian Stewardship and the Need for Recreation

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*This article taken from the July 2011 issue of the International Catholic Stewardship Council e-Bulletin*

Is there such a thing as a stewardship of recreation? Some people might dismiss the thought. But they'd be wrong.

In his book, *The Gift of the Jews*, author Thomas Cahill observes that, in receiving the Ten Commandments, the ancient Hebrews did something no other ancient society had ever done: they established a day of rest. "The God who made the universe and rested bids us to do the same, calling us to a weekly restoration of prayer, study, and recreation (or re-creation)."

For those of us in the Northern Hemisphere at least, probably no other month bids us to relax as the month of July does. Backyard barbecues, days at the pool or the beach, a recreational outing or simply the lazy idleness of a mid-year Sunday afternoon invite us to slow down. And this invitation should be heeded. Sometimes, our society induces in us a sense of guilt if we're not "doing." But turning off the computer and the phone and spending quality time with those around us, or finding time for our own interior lives, is stewardship of our time which leads to the place where God dwells. It's a good example for our kids as well: July presents a wonderful time to "rest" from all the electronic screens and busyness that dominate their young lives.

July is also the month when U.S. citizens celebrate the proclamation of their freedom. When the Hebrew people first received the Ten Commandments, they too had just received their freedom from the Egyptians after a sojourn in the wilderness. Cahill thinks it's no coincidence that a people recently liberated were in need of a directive to rest and reflect. "Leisure," he writes, "is the necessary ground of creativity, and a free people are free to imitate the creativity of God."

So, the next time you feel guilty about a quiet, reflective time of doing "nothing" remember that recreation also means "re-creation" and that to be a truly creative person, a steward of our interior resources, we must honor our need to rest, relax, be with others, read and play.