

### **Pause then Participate**

This year for Easter Camp (you may have picked up from the hashtags) the theme was PAUSE. I really loved this theme, in fact I loved it so much we did a whole series at youth group on it.

So I thought this morning I would share with you some of my reflections from Easter Camp and this theme of PAUSE.

PRAYER: "So Father God I ask that you would still our hearts before you now."

Psalm 46:8-11

**8** Come, see the glorious works of the Lord:  
See how he brings destruction upon the world.

**9** He causes wars to end throughout the earth.  
He breaks the bow and snaps the spear;  
he burns the shields with fire.

**10** "Be still, and know that I am God!  
I will be honored by every nation.  
I will be honored throughout the world."

**11** The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among us;  
the God of Israel is our fortress. *Interlude (pause)*

This is an awesome Psalm that we have looked at a lot this term at youth group. But we quickly discovered that being still before God is a very difficult thing to do and the repercussions of not being still before God is that we struggle to see these glorious works that the Psalm talks about.

If I'm honest Easter Camp was a real challenge this year. We had lots of logistical challenges with the setting up of our campsite and this storm (Cyclone Cook) that never actually hit, but it did cause camp to start a day later, which meant we as a leadership team were pretty run off our feet, before camp had even started.

We also had these expectations that we were going to see God move in a dramatic wow sort of way at camp, which for whatever reason we weren't seeing.

So you could say that things weren't exactly playing out as we had expected.

We began to feel quite discouraged as a team, wondering what is going on here.

For me personally, it wasn't until I took time out with God, paused for a moment and was still with him, that I started to notice the intimate details at which God was at work.

As I paused, I began to notice the small yet significant things God was doing in the lives of our teens (as we have heard about this morning) and how He was interested in the details, not just big wow moments.

On one of the nights at camp after a response time, I decided to head out the back to the counseling room, where some of our leaders and teens were, to check that everyone was doing ok. I wandered round and round the room finding everyone from our group that was there, except one girl. I waited for a while in the room hoping I might see her, until one of the leaders came running up to me with my phone. It had run out of battery earlier that day, so I had left it in my tent charging. This leader happened to be in my tent looking for something at the exact moment a text came through from this girl I couldn't find, asking me to come and sit with her to chat. So the leader grabbed my phone and brought it straight to me. The girl had also included her exact location in the text. And so I was able to find her, sit with her, listen and pray with her.

And I believe God orchestrated these details, so that he could do his work in this girl's life.

You see God cares about the details...

In fact He does some of His finest work through the details.

But, we need to pause to notice these details.

We need to pause to notice the intimate details in which God is at work.

"Be still and know that I am God."

We often hear that our lives are too busy, that we spend too much time looking at screens and that we are growing up a generation that don't know how to have real relationships because of all this clutter in their lives.

I also regularly hear Christians saying things like "I just don't feel very close to God right now", "I'm going through a dry patch", or "I just don't know if God is really there".

And while these are all legitimate things to say, I can't help but put two and two together...

When our lives are filled with clutter, we struggle to pause.

When we struggle to pause, we struggle to see the details.

When we struggle to see the details, we struggle to see God.

“Be still and know that I am God.”

I have a wonderful supervisor for my role as a pastor, and she is regularly reminding me that our brains are wired to remember the negative things more than the positive. This is why, say in a day, if 10 positive things happen and one negative thing happens, we would remember and dwell on the negative thing that happened, rather than the 10 positive things.

She would then go on to tell me that research shows that we need to pause in a positive moment for at least 10 seconds to fully remember it and how it made us feel.

This seems unfair if you ask me, but it does prove the significance of pausing.

And that in order for us to notice the intimate details at which God is at work, we need to pause, even just for a moment, even just for 10 seconds.

“Be still and know that I am God.”

So what is your pause moment going to be?

At Easter Camp one of the key speakers asked us this question.

Many of you that went to Easter Camp thought of a specific thing you could do and made a commitment to implementing that thing in your life.

Some of you said you wanted to take time each week to listen to worship music, as a way of connecting with God. Others talked about taking a moment each day to pray for a friend or going for a walk in the local park to reflect with God amongst nature.

I want to remind those that were at Easter Camp to remember your pause moment and to do it.

For those that weren't at camp I encourage you to also think of a pause moment that you can implement in your life, in order to...

“Be still and know that He is God.”

Because when we pause we not only start to notice the intimate details at which God is at work, but we get to participate with God in these details – His story, His Plans.

On the last night of camp, the night they normally have a big response time, there wasn't one. Well at least one facilitated by Easter Camp. I remember at first feeling really disappointed that there was no opportunity for the teens to respond to God, but as I paused I remembered that it's not Easter Camp that changes lives, it's God.

I felt really challenged by God to start praying for our young people. And that just because Easter Camp hadn't facilitated a response, didn't mean that God wasn't going to respond and that He has empowered us as followers of Christ to participate with Him in His works.

So I spread the word amongst our leadership team and we started praying for our young people. Immediately we saw our young being filled with the Holy Spirit and responding to God. God really moved amongst them as we prayed and worshiped God together.

We paused before God, then participated with God.

I started questioning why we wait for Easter Camp to provide a big God moment, when we can be making the most of every moment. Whether it be at youth group or gravity, at church, at school, at work, at home ect...

Don't just wait for the big moment, make the most of every moment.

And in order to do that we need to pause before God, then participate with God.

Be still and know that I am God is an invitation to us to participate in God's story/His details, with Him (not for Him).

You see there's a difference here. God doesn't expect us to go off on our own to do stuff for Him. He wants to partner with us, to do this with us.

But first we must pause, to see these details in which God is at work, and then take a step and participate. Not waiting around for the big moment, but taking a step with God into THE moment.

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Pray...

- During prayer invite people to pause and think of a pause moment they can implement in their lives – maybe it’s something you need to give up or do, maybe it’s simply blocking out time in your calendar to be still with God.
- Pray for strength to do this and courage to take a step towards participating with God in his story