

Friends

On March the 22nd each year, people around the world celebrate “Goof off Day” – a day to take a break from the stresses and strains of life and embrace playfulness and fun. You might like to plan a day of fun activities, gathering friends or relatives and go to the cinema or a theme park, play crazy golf or go on a scavenger hunt. You could watch funny movies or dress up in amusing costumes, or take a walk or have a picnic. It doesn't matter. What does matter is that we take a break and spend the day doing something we enjoy. Playfulness and laughter are essential for our mental health and wellbeing and this day is a reminder to prioritise these things.

God of course, thought that this was much more important than just one day a year, and invented a day off a week. Unless we actually believe that God, the creator of everything, got tired, then I think we have to see the Sabbath as the seventh act of creation. Humans of course, messed with it. Genesis 2:2-3 tells us: And on the seventh day, God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

It's a great shame that the Pharisees and then the Puritans understood this to mean that no fun should be had. Surely there is a difference between not working and sitting there doing nothing all day. I think Jesus would approve of the occasional goofing off. After all, he was happy to sit light to the Sabbath when it meant that someone would no longer suffer, and surely there is something to be said about our own need for rest and relaxation to avoid our own suffering. This Sunday, I am goofing off in a very particular way. I am preaching in the morning, but then I am joining the Anglicans to sing Stainer's Crucifixion. We are rehearsing at the Parish Church, having a gap to attend Evensong at St. Georges, and then coming back to sing the Crucifixion as an act of worship. It might not be everyone's idea of a relaxing day but I shall enjoy it.

Whatever you decide to do this week, remember to put in some time for fun – your spirit will thank you for it.

God bless, Vicci