

Leviticus 25:1-6

¹While Moses was on Mount Sinai, God said to him,

²"Give the following instructions to the people of Israel. When you have entered the land I am giving you, the land itself must observe a Sabbath rest before God every seventh year.

³For six years you may plant your fields and prune your vineyards and harvest your crops,

⁴but during the seventh year the land must have a Sabbath year of complete rest. It is the God's Sabbath. Do not plant your fields or prune your vineyards during that year.

⁵And don't store away the crops that grow on their own or gather the grapes from your unpruned vines. The land must have a year of complete rest.

⁶But you may eat whatever the land produces on its own during its Sabbath. This applies to you, your male and female servants, your hired workers, and the temporary residents who live with you.

Exodus 16:21-30

²¹After this the people gathered the food morning by morning, each family according to what they needed. And as the sun became hot, the flakes they had not picked up melted and disappeared.

²²On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much food as usual-- four quarts for each person instead of two. Then all the leaders of the community came and asked Moses for an explanation.

²³He told them, "This is what God commanded: Tomorrow will be a day of complete rest, a holy Sabbath day set apart for God. So bake or boil food as much as you want today, but be sure to set aside what is left for tomorrow."

²⁴So they put some food aside until morning, just as Moses had commanded. And in the morning the leftover food was wholesome and remained fresh, without bugs or odor.

²⁵Moses said, "Eat this food today, for today is a Sabbath day dedicated to God. There will be no food on the ground today."

²⁶You may gather and harvest the food for six days, but the seventh day is the Sabbath. There will be no food on the ground that day."

²⁷Some of the people went out anyway on the seventh day, but they found no food.

²⁸God said to Moses, How long will the people refuse to obey my commands and instructions?

²⁹They must realize that the Sabbath is a gift from God. That is why God gives you a two-day supply on the sixth day, so there will be enough for two days. On the Sabbath day you must each stay in your place. Do not go out to pick up food on the seventh day."

What do these texts imply about the importance of taking care of the land? Based on these texts, how would you define rest?

Have you ever worked so hard that you needed rest?

Midrash

There is a story of an old man who was a guest in a certain place at the home of a pious man [righteous man] and people had great respect for him. At noon, the householder's wife asked her husband, "What shall we eat tonight in our guest's honor?" He replied, "Our own *adam*." When the old man heard this, he was greatly disturbed, as he said to himself: It appears that in this place the people eat one another; and even as they are about to eat a man in my honor, it may be that when another guest comes after me, they will eat me in his honor. What did the old man do? He left that house and went to another. At mealtime, the first householder went around the town and asked, "Have you seen the old man who came to my house today?" One person replied, "I saw him enter the house of So-and-so." The household went there and found the old man seated at the table. So he asked him, "Sir, what made you leave my home? Will you please leave this home and come back to mine?" The old man replied, "I will not go." Even though the householder begged a second and third time, the old man refused to go, so the householder left. The second householder asked the old man: "Why did you act that way, disrespecting such a pious man?" The old man replied, "I heard that for dinner that they would feed me *adam*, and out of fear I fled and came here." The household burst into laughter and said to the old man, "In our area, *adam* is a kind of vegetable, so called because it resembles a hum