

Ten Important Things to Do on Vacation

by Archpriest Michael Iliashenko

It is important that our vacation time serve as a path to Christ, so that the time given us would not fly by unnoticed; it should be spent well and with spiritual benefit. An Elder of exalted spiritual life was asked: "How did you spend your time away?" He replied: "Prayerfully."

I think the following recommendations can be offered:

1. **Make every effort to improve your health:** try to get enough sleep; go for walks in the fresh air as often as you can; put your daily regime in order. Having a bad time off and not restoring your strength can lead to difficulty in doing your work with proper concentration over the course of the year.
2. **Expand your prayer rule by adding something that you do not normally have time to read:** prayers, psalms, or a chapter from the Gospels. Or read your usual rule with greater attention and concentration.
3. **Read at least one book about the faith:** something by one of the Holy Fathers (for instance, St. John Chrysostom) or by a contemporary theologian.
4. **Try to visit a monastery and venerate its sacred objects.** Do not allow yourself to miss the Sunday Liturgy, justifying yourself by saying you are on vacation.
5. **An information break is also essential.** Put aside a few days of your vacation time that will be entirely free from the Internet, social networks, and frequent text messaging. Reduce the amount of time you spend reading the news or watching television. Hold out for as long as possible!
6. **Communicate on a serious and deep level with members of your family – wife, husband, parents – without hurrying and without being distracted every five minutes by the telephone.** Talk about life, joys, problems, and plans; rejoice in one another's company.
7. **As our children grow up, we often stop teaching them anything new in the same way we did when they were little.** Read aloud to them an interesting but serious work that will open up something new to them. Watch a good, meaningful film with them. Teach them to listen to silence or to understand the beauty of poetry.
8. **Think of something that members of your household have been asking you to do for some time, but that you have kept putting off.** Take the children to the zoo, repair something, or sew up something – fulfill what was requested of you.
9. **Complete an act of charity that you have long been putting off.**
10. **Visit your godparents, godchildren, or old family friends whom you have not seen for a long time.**