

# Get a Good Sleep! / God's Special Rest

**Jasmine:** Are you OK Rani? Have you got a headache?

**Rani:** No, it's not a headache, Jasmine, I'm just tired. I haven't been sleeping very well...I feel as though I'd like to go and lie down for a rest...but I can't. I don't have time for that, and I have to look after Vonnie. If I went to sleep she'd get up to all sorts of mischief.

**Jasmine:** When I saw you with your head in your hands I thought something must be wrong. It must be hard when you feel tired during the day because you can't get a good sleep at night. I don't have that problem. As soon as I put my head on the pillow at night I fall asleep and then I sleep like a baby.

**Carol:** Hello friend. I'm Carol and this is Women of Hope. Tammy's here with me again today.

**Tammy:** Hello from me too.

**Carol:** I wonder if you're more like Jasmine or Rani. Do you sleep like a baby? I like that saying – to sleep like a baby – because babies sleep so well once they *are* asleep... usually. Of course not all babies go to sleep easily.

What about you? Do you sleep well? Or are you like Rani and have trouble sleeping sometimes, or maybe most nights?

**Tammy/Carol:** I'm more like Jasmine. I sleep very well almost every night. I fall asleep easily and next thing I know it's morning and time to get up again.

**Carol/Tammy:** Not me! I'm more like Rani. Sometimes I get into bed and I just lie there for ages and I can't get to sleep. I toss and turn and wriggle and try to get comfortable but I take a long time to drop off to sleep. Or I get to sleep easily and then I wake up an hour or so later and can't get back to sleep. Sometimes, when it's time to get up in the morning I'd really rather stay in bed and get some more rest.

**Tammy:** Sleep is important for our bodies...and our minds isn't it! God made us to have regular times of sleep. Medical experts say most people need about seven to eight hours of sleep each night. Though this varies with age. When we're asleep our bodies and brains do some important work.

...Yes, it sounds funny to have our bodies and brains working while we're asleep, but that's what happens. Our *bodies* work on repairing our muscles...and our *minds* work on sorting out our memories and releasing hormones that control our growth and our appetite.

There are things that can make it hard for us to sleep... mothers of tiny babies know all about this – as they get up at night to feed their baby. Some people have to work at night and that can make sleeping difficult, as they have to sleep in the daytime.

**Carol:** It can be hard to sleep when we have something on our mind. Perhaps we're *worrying* about one of our family...or maybe something *exciting* is about to happen. Things keep popping into our minds when we should be relaxing and falling asleep. That happens to me sometimes.

**Tammy:** Well, here are some ideas for things you can do to help you get a good sleep...

Try to go to sleep at about the same time each night and get up at about the same time each morning. This helps your brain to get into a routine of sleeping and waking.

Try to have the room where you sleep quiet and dark. Too much light can make it hard to get to sleep and noise can also make it difficult. Perhaps you have to share the room where you sleep with other family members so encourage them to be as quiet as possible.

Don't eat much food late at night. Try to eat your meal about four hours before you go to bed so the food is digested before you lie down. A small snack just before bedtime is OK though.

**Carol:** They sound like good ideas. Here are some more things you can try...

Keep active every day if you can. You might work in the garden – so you get plenty of exercise every day. Or you might have to walk long distances each day...so you should sleep well.

If you're not active during the day, try to have some exercise a few hours before your bed time...like going for a walk, or riding a bike...or playing outside with a ball.

In the last half hour before you go to bed try to do something relaxing...read for a while, take a gentle walk, or listen to some music.

Try to spend some time out in the sunlight every day. Early in the day is best so you won't get too much ultra violet light and get sunburnt.

And here are two things NOT to do – Don't do hard exercise just before bed, and don't drink coffee or tea, or anything else that contains caffeine, late in the day. Chocolate and some soft drinks also contain caffeine. Caffeine can keep you awake.

**Tammy:** Remember we said that worrying can keep us awake? Well here's an idea that helps me – I try to talk to someone about what's worrying me.

And when I'm thinking about all the things I have to do the next day...I write a list of what I need to do tomorrow before I go to bed. Then I can stop thinking about them because I know I won't forget anything.

**Carol:** Good idea Tammy. And make sure you're not too hot or too cold in bed. We naturally fall asleep on a cooling cycle. So if you have a warm shower or bath, make it a couple of hours before bed, or have a cool wash close to bedtime.

If you can't sleep, and you've been awake for a long time, get up and go into another room and read or do a quiet activity, using dim lighting, until you feel very sleepy. Don't watch television or turn on bright lights.

**Tammy:** Sometimes people who can't sleep at night try to catch up on their sleep during the day. This is not a good idea. It's OK to have a short nap of no more than half an hour as long as it's before about four o'clock in the afternoon. In fact that can be a good idea.

In some places everyone has a rest in the afternoon. Perhaps this is a custom where you live – especially if it's hot in the afternoon. The important thing is to not rest for too long so that you'll be

more likely to sleep well at night.

**Carol:** We've discussed some good ideas to help us sleep. Can you remember them?

- Go to bed and get up at the same time each day
- Sleep in a dark, quiet room if you can
- Do something relaxing in the hour before you go to bed.

**Tammy:** And here are some more...

- Spend some time out in the sunlight every day if you can
- Try to do something very active each day – but not late at night
- And remember the one that helps me if I'm worrying about what I have to do the next day?  
...Yes I write them down.

**Carol:** Did you remember them? ...And here are some of those things NOT to do...

- Don't eat a lot of food within the last four hours before bedtime
- Don't eat or drink things containing caffeine late in the day
- And try not to be too hot or too cold when you're in bed.

Tammy: If you find that you regularly have trouble sleeping over a long time then go and see your doctor or health worker. They will check whether anything else is causing your problem and they will suggest what to do.

**Carol:** There's a lovely old Christian song that talks about rest. It was written more than a hundred years ago. The first part of the song goes like this.

'There is a place of quiet rest,  
Near to the heart of God.'

The song tells about the restful and peaceful feeling of being near to God's heart. I think the writer of the song meant that God can give us a feeling of peace and rest when we ask Jesus to be with us. Isn't that a lovely thought!

**Tammy:** It is...I know that song too...I love those words about being near to God's heart – that's real spiritual rest. Shall I sing a little of it to you?

**Carol:** We've been talking about sleep and how important it is for all of us. In fact, God made us to need sleep. God designed us to have rest times. Even God himself took a rest when he had finished creating the whole world and everything in it. In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, it says: 'By the seventh day God had finished his work, and so he rested. God blessed the seventh day and made it special because on that day he rested from his work.' (Genesis 2:2-3, CEV)

I'm sure God didn't **need** to have a rest because he is all-powerful, but he did take a rest to set us a good example. He wanted us to know the importance of resting.

**Tammy:** And, God told the Hebrew people to take a rest day each week. In the book of Exodus, in the Old Testament part of the Bible, God told the people to keep the seventh day of the week as a

special rest day. The rest day was called the Sabbath day and it was a day for rest from working, and for time out to worship him.

This was what God instructed them to do in his rules for living, the Ten Commandments. He said: 'Remember that the Sabbath Day belongs to me. You have six days when you can do your work, but the seventh day of each week belongs to me, your God. No one is to work on that day—not you, your children, your slaves, your animals, or the foreigners who live in your towns. In six days I made the sky, the earth, the oceans, and everything in them, but on the seventh day I rested. That's why I made the Sabbath a special day that belongs to me. (Exodus 20: 8-11, CEV)

**Carol:** Then, when God's Son, Jesus, was here on Earth as a man, he made sure that *he* had rest times...and he encouraged his followers, to take rests too. One time when they had been very busy, Jesus said to them: 'Let's go to a place where we can be alone and get some rest.' (Mark 6:31)

Just like Jesus and his disciples, we need times of rest for our bodies and our minds to be restored.

**Tammy:** I agree. It's very important that we have rest times in our week. We don't have to always be doing lots of things. It's good to rest, even for a short time in your busy day - just sit quietly, or lie down and rest. You might look at the clouds, or watch the birds, or read for a while, or listen to some music.

**Carol:** We need physical rest, but we also need spiritual rest and refreshment. We need to take time to just know that God is with us. We need to spend time thinking and reflecting and praying. It's good to read from the Bible, God's Word, too. Reading the Bible puts us in touch with what God wants us to hear. If you don't read, you might find someone who can read the Bible to you. And you will hear something from God's word, the Bible every time you listen to Women of Hope. Let's think again about the other type of rest that our song was about...the rest that we can have as we put our trust in God, and allow him to bring his peace into our minds and hearts. Tammy would you sing a little more of that song for us?

**Tammy:** Sure Carol.

**Carol:** Jesus said something very encouraging about how he can give us rest in our busy lives. He said: 'If you are tired from carrying heavy burdens, come to me and I will give you rest. Take the yoke I give you. Put it on your shoulders and learn from me. I am gentle and humble, and you will find rest. This yoke is easy to bear, and this burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30 CEV)

**Tammy:** What do you think Jesus meant by that? ...Jesus was talking about us choosing to make him the Lord of our lives. In Jesus' time two animals would often be joined together by a wooden yoke, so they could work together to pull a plough for a farmer. Some people still use animals such as buffaloes this way. Jesus used this picture to talk about being his followers, linking ourselves to him.

He said that he would treat us gently as we learn from him and that we will find rest as we depend on him to pull the heavy load. This is spiritual rest and refreshment. When we put our trust in Jesus and make him our leader he gives us a sense of peace and rest.

**Carol:** Remember the words of that song Tammy sang? 'There is a place of quiet rest near to the heart of God.' That's the sort of rest Jesus meant. It's the feeling of knowing we belong to God and that he is always with us. It's the feeling of knowing that we have committed our lives to God through deciding to follow Jesus. Knowing that God is with us can give us a special sense of peace in everything that happens, good and bad.

**Tammy:** I've found that it's true in my life. We've been talking about sleep and how some people have trouble getting to sleep. One thing that can be very helpful when you find you can't sleep is to pray and ask the Lord to quieten your heart and help you relax. You can ask him to help solve problems that are making you feel anxious. Even if you still don't fall asleep easily you can ask God to help you rest quietly while you're lying down. You can ask Jesus to take the worries, the heavy burdens, and allow you to rest with his peace filling you.

**Carol:** We all have times in our lives when things make us anxious and worried. We can help prepare ourselves for these times by spending time praying every day. Let me tell you about a woman called Susanna Wesley, who lived about 300 years ago. She had a lot of children and it was hard for her to find the time or a quiet place to pray. So she thought of something very simple. She used to stop what she was doing and put her apron over her head and then pray. Her children knew that when she was doing that they must not disturb her.

**Tammy:** What a great way to get some peace – putting an apron over your head! I wonder if there's a simple way that you can make time to pray each day, maybe not by putting an apron over your head, but perhaps you can think of a good way.

**Carol:** I have some favourite words from the Bible I'd like to share with you. They come from a letter that the apostle Paul, inspired by God, wrote to the people who lived in Philippi. (Philippians 4:6-7) 'Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts, offer up your prayers and requests to God. Then, because you belong to Christ Jesus, God will bless you with peace that no one can completely understand. And this peace will control the way you think and feel. (Philippians 4:6-7, CEV)

**Tammy:** These words tell us that God will give us his special peace when we pray to him. Just before we finish we'll listen to a song that our friend Ellen wrote called 'The peace of God.' Ellen is part of our Women of Hope team. She loves these words too...

**Carol:** Let's pray together as we finish today...

*Dear God, Thank you that you can give us a feeling of peace and rest. Please help my friend to bring all her worries to you...and to ask you to take control of all the things that are making her*

*anxious. Please bring your special peace into her life. Amen*

**Tammy:** It's time for us to go now. We would love to hear from you, any time. You can contact us at...

Goodbye, God bless you as you ask him to give you rest and peace.

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