

Sabbath Rest

Ouch... !

"The trees need to be pruned!" – "We just had this done, didn't we?" – "Well, that was a year ago and now spring is around the corner and it has to be taken care of, again."

'Pruning fruit trees is necessary to develop a strong structured tree, to maintain tree vigor and control size, and to produce abundant high quality fruit.' That is what one of the county extension master gardeners is writing.

Here are some more suggestions he gives:

- ◇ A fruit tree which has not started to bear fruit requires little pruning except to select main branches.
- ◇ Working on fruit bearing trees requires only light annual pruning to control tree shape and size as well to open up the tree to allow for better sun penetration.
- ◇ When pruning neglected fruit trees, it is not necessary or possible to correct all errors in tree structure due to the lack of pruning in the past. Complete rejuvenation may take several years of heavy pruning. The main objectives in pruning neglected fruit trees are to reduce tree size, thin out branches and most importantly increase fruit production and quality.

Now you might ask yourself why we print this gardening stuff in our newsletter! Most of you don't even have fruit trees to take care of. But, how about applying these principles in your own lives? Reflect on the following scripture references and prayerfully

Restore your calling!

When we look into the valley below and toward the distant mountains we see a carpet of green, a forest of trees, a patchwork of colors and shapes. This beautiful mosaic is a conglomerate of individual trees, white pines, firs, oaks, all with their distinctive shapes and colors. Unless they happen to be close by we cannot distinguish them as separate pieces, yet, each one of them is unique.

Sometimes we get lost in the vast forest of humanity, fighting the fear of being alone without direction and feeling swallowed up by issues that seem to block out the light. We trudge along looking for a higher place that can help

ask the Lord to deal with your heart on these issues.

Lev. 25:3-4 3 For six years sow your fields, and for six years **prune** your vineyards and gather their crops. 4 But in the seventh year the land is to have a sabbath of rest, a sabbath to the LORD. Do not sow your fields or **prune** your vineyards.

JN 15:1 "I am the true **vine**, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he **prunes** so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the **vine**. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.



us gain our bearings and return home.

Each leader serving the church family should be convinced of his unique calling by the Lord before entering this line of work. Some who did not have it to begin with cannot lose it later, but those who had it and then lose it or are on the verge of losing it because of burnout need to take on the responsibility to restore this calling, seek the Giver of the call, listen to what He says and then go out once again and do what He has called them to do.

No matter what circumstances they find themselves in, Shepherd's Refuge provides the right environment for those in

church leadership who need to get a breath of fresh air, to seek a time of renewal, find a shoulder to cry on and discover different ways to approach life issues. There they can strengthen the body, mind and spirit, recalibrate that compass and regain a sense of direction, and with deeper conviction go back into the forest of humanity with the renewed determination to make a difference against all odds. Each need is addressed individually with the aim of getting these warriors ready and equipped to face the battles of life with renewed strength, clearer vision and stronger fortitude.

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- ◆ Restore your calling!
- ◆ Networking follow-up
- ◆ Progress report
- ◆ What denomination?

Headlines

Dec 04, 2004

Ground breaking



Psalm 146:5

How blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, Whose hope is in the LORD his God

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Networking follow up

In the Fall Issue of our newsletter we had made a call for networking, and it worked!

We have been lead to new contacts and extend a heartfelt **Welcome** to our new partners! And to those who brought them on board we say: **Thank You!**

Caring for those who care.

Progress Report



- December 4, 2004 Ground breaking for the main house
- Main house under construction (see picture)
- Maintenance of equipment
- Strategic partnership plans getting finalized.
- Removal of unused fence materials, landscaping
- Development of more detailed site plan, including walking trails

Did you know?

- That Shepherd's Refuge land is bordering on two sides with the Chattahoochee National Forest?
- You can subscribe to have this newsletter sent by email (info@shepherdsrefuge.org)
- That what Shepherd's Refuge provides will affect people all over the world?
- That \$480 will cover the cost for a church leader with spouse to spend ONE week at Shepherd's Refuge?
- That volunteers are lined up to cut and maintain walking trails?

What Denomination?

As I was sharing with a young man, the big question came, 'Why are there so many different denominations and churches?' 'Good question,' I said, and then I began to take him in the direction of his personal relationship with Christ. So many differences, but one Lord. So many differences, but one body. So many differences and Christ loves the diversity of expression. Jesus is the head of the church and the One who is working with all His different expressions known as the body of Christ. In my association with Shepherd's Refuge I have come to appreciate their heart to reach across all denominational lines since we are all a part of the body of Christ. Shepherd's Refuge is a place where you can come and experience the Chief

Shepherd's presence as a refuge. The longer I pastor the more I realize that it is really all about the kingdom. I've also come to realize that kingdom work is challenging and we all need a time and place to get away and disengage. Shepherd's Refuge is that kind of place, where pastors and leaders, who are sheep also, can come and rest with the Chief Shepherd.

(By Bradley White, Pastor, Member of the Board)

