

*Jesus does not rush or hurry into action. He moves at what I refer to as a sacred pace—a living speed characterized by peace, patience, and attentiveness.* By peace, I mean an abiding sense that all is well. By patience, I mean activism with waiting inside of it. By attentiveness, I mean being thoroughly focused on the matter of the moment.

One of the alluring qualities in Jesus was his embodiment of serenity. His witness was all the more striking when it was set against a backdrop of exceedingly trying situations and circumstances. For example, there was the time when Jesus walked right through a crowd determined to throw him off of a cliff. His peace was not the absence of tension. I believe that Jesus agonized at times about things, just as we do. But the impression we get from Scripture is that somehow, some way; all tension was routed through Jesus' peaceful center, and therein was transcended and transformed.

Converging with Jesus' peace was his patience. Jesus could move out, when necessary, in a spirit of intense engagement. But just as important, he knew when and how to wait. He seemed to live by an inner thermostat that was set on "calm and deliberate." Jesus knew that attending to problems quickly did not solve them. Mohandas Gandhi is reported to have said, "There is more to life than increasing its speed."

Jesus' ministerial style stands in direct contrast to the ministerial styles of most. Rarely did Jesus move with great haste and all deliberate speed. The disciples found out on the boat that night that Jesus did not jump at every beck and call. His responses to the various demands and invitations placed before him were characteristically measured and patient.

The third quality of Jesus' sacred pace, attentiveness, is no less striking and important. Beset with issue after issue, Jesus had a way of focusing exclusively on what he was doing at the time. Once he brought that motion to its end, he moved on to the next matter, which then would

become the recipient of his full focus. Even when he was interrupted, he did not divide his focus. He would transfer his full attention to the “interruption,” and then return to the original matter, as in the case of the hemorrhaging woman (Luke 8:40-56). Jesus was already on an “emergency call,” but his attention to the moment was so intense that he was able to feel the woman’s intrusion, address it, and then return his focus to the call on hold.

I think the sacred pace of Jesus is a much-needed contrast to the prevailing ministry (or care-giving) style that has us (1) doing too much, (2) doing too much at one time, and (3) doing too much as fast as we can. This three-headed demon is driving many ministers and their spouses to early graves—emotionally and physically. We can be liberated by internalizing the peace, patience, and attentiveness demonstrated by Jesus.