

SLEEPING: AN ACT OF TRUST

Many people have times when getting to sleep is difficult, especially those of us who live with mood disorders. There are practical ways to avoid this problem: going to bed at the same time each night, having a regular routine, making sure you are warm (you might need to wear socks for example).

When you have trouble sleeping,

- What keeps you from sleeping?
- What are some of the practical things you do to help you sleep?
- How well do they work?

Read what Mark Buchanan wrote about sleep in his book, *The Rest of God*

Sleep is “. . . a relinquishment. It is self-abandonment: of control, of power, of consciousness, of identity. We direct nothing in our sleep. We master nothing. We lose ourselves and are carried like children or prisoners into a netherworld alternately grotesque and idyllic, carnivalesque and Elysian. In sleep we become infants again: utterly vulnerable, completely defenseless, totally dependent. Out of control.

. . . So, sleep, besides being a necessity, is also an act of faith . . . we give ourselves, regardless of our unfinished business, into God’s care. We sleep simply because we believe God will look after us.”

A STORY:

A person with bipolar disorder told me about her troubles with sleep. Her problem was not that she tried and couldn’t; she did not even want to try. She drank coffee to stay awake. I suspect that she was afraid of letting go. Was she afraid of losing control perhaps?

King David, very much understood this. Even while he was fleeing his own son Absalom, he wrote in Psalm 3:1-5 about his trust in God and his ability to sleep

*O Lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me!
Many are saying of me, “God will not deliver him.”
But you are a shield around me, O Lord;
you bestow glory on me and lift up my head.
To the Lord I cry aloud, and he answers me from his holy hill.
I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.*

The following verse is a good one to have by your bed for times you can’t sleep:

I will lie down and sleep in peace,

*for you alone, O Lord,
make me dwell in safety.*
Psalm 4:8