



# Near and Now

*When My Calling Is Exhausting and Produces Burnout – Elijah*

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## Warm-up Question

*What comes to mind when you think of the concept of “enough”?*



Photo by Meg Jenson on [Unsplash](#).

## Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

## It is enough

Read [1 Kings 19](#).

### Bible Story Reflection

The beginning of this passage, at least as we read it in English, centers on the notion of “enough.” At first, Elijah has had enough in the sense that he longs to be done. Things have gotten too difficult and dangerous for him, he’s miserable, and he wants to die. God, however, does not allow him to die. Instead, God sends an angel to bring Elijah food. After Elijah has slept and eaten, he has enough in a different sense--enough energy to keep going.

One of the best parts of this story is the emphasis on meeting Elijah’s bodily needs. When Elijah is miserable, God does not tell him that he’s wrong to feel that way, that he should pull himself up by his bootstraps, or that his misery indicates a lack of faith. Instead, God gives Elijah time to sleep and then provides him with food and drink--twice. This very simple yet essential care is reminiscent of Jean Yang’s viral [tweet](#) that says, “Two important lessons I learned in my twenties: - If you think everyone hates you, you probably need to sleep. - If you think you hate everyone, you probably need to eat.”

Many of us could stand to learn from this story (and the tweet). Much of our society glorifies depriving ourselves of sleep in order to work longer hours. We’re also inundated with messages about depriving ourselves of food in order to be thinner. Neither of those sets of messages represents God’s desires for us, nor is either set of messages a recipe for thriving. Instead, caring for ourselves is allowed, encouraged, and in fact essential.

### Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever had enough in the sense that you wanted to be done--to walk away, to quit, or even to die? What caused that? What did you do about it?
2. When was the last time when you had enough in the sense of knowing you had sufficient energy to continue? What led you to that place? Can you replicate those circumstances?
3. Have you received messages that God wants you to deprive yourself? How does this passage hit you, if you have?
4. How much rest does it take for you to feel like yourself and carry out your vocation well? If you don’t usually get that amount of rest, what would it take to change that?
5. Do you tend to feel like you are equally part of God’s creation, for which God desires good, as everyone else? Or do you tend to see yourself as separate and irrelevant, or separate and uniquely special and deserving? What would it take to see yourself as just as deserving as everyone else?
6. How do we determine what is enough? How do we ensure that we’re taking care of ourselves while also exercising restraint and not hoarding resources or over-consuming?

### **Activity Suggestions**

If you and your congregation have more than enough, raise money for food, clothing, or mutual aid for those in your community who don't.

Bring cups and a pitcher of water, lemonade, or juice. Pour the beverage for one another. The person receiving the beverage should say, "Enough, thanks," when they have received the amount that they want.

Lead your group in a guided meditation emphasizing God's love and compassion.

### **Prayer Concerns**

People struggling with insomnia, people experiencing food insecurity, and anyone who feels overwhelmed or lacking in resources

### **Closing Prayer**

Fortify me, O God, when I am exhausted and ready to quit. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

