

days have been spent trying to figure out how to convince people that my chain hotel was the one where they should stay. Never too far from my thoughts was how to make my hotel sound better or different than all the others right next door. One day, during a staff meeting at Carter Caves, I realized this place was different. As we were discussing the business of the week, I looked up from the stack of papers and saw a squirrel on a tree limb. Immediately I stood up and walked to the window. The staff asked, "what's wrong?" It was then that I realized being a park manager was a true blessing.

Part of my job responsibilities were driving around the 1,800-acre park and checking on things. Checking and seeing that everyone was working and safe, looking for dead trees or maybe stopping at the campground to talk with guests. One Monday afternoon around 1 p.m., I stopped to allow five deer to cross the road. One doe stopped so close to my window I could reach out and touch her face. I felt warmth and a new excitement spread through me as I realized it was Monday afternoon, I was doing my job and I was eye-to-eye with a deer.

"Thank you Lord for this day and for this deer," my silent prayer began. "Thank you Father for the beauty for this magnificent creation that can not be duplicated next door. Thank you that I don't have to spend my days surrounded by concrete and asphalt."

Why do people seek out nature's beauty? Life is so busy, noisy and rushed. We all need a place



to go and breathe deeply, to let go of our daily lives. We need time to reconnect with the creator of the mountains, caves and waterfalls. To know on some level there is something or someone bigger than us, something bigger than the stressors of everyday life. Psalms 46:10 says, "Be still and know that I am God." These days we just aren't still enough.

Now one very important priority of my job is to let people know there is a place. A magical, wonderful place where they can stand by a waterfall, feel the breeze on their face, see wildlife playing from the restaurant window or meditate by a slow moving river. You're invited to that place with a promise, "Come and when you leave you will feel better than when you first arrived." That place is, Cumberland Falls State Resort Park.

I noted the above thoughts three years ago. Now in my seventh year as a resort park manager, I have learned more. I have learned that God created the mountains, rivers, lakes, waterfalls and all nature for our enjoyment. I learned nature is what God intended to surround us with — we were intended to hear the waterfalls and watch the raccoons and squirrels scamper.

I have also learned I am responsible for a place, for something that man did not make. I am responsible for telling everyone to go to these places and feel the grace that fills you up as you empty out the not so good things. Come and breathe ... breathe deep ... be still ... be better when you leave than when you arrived.

*This article was authored by Lisa Davis, Park Manager at Cumberland Falls State Resort Park in Corbin, Ky. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Commonwealth of Kentucky or the Kentucky Department of Parks or Cumberland Falls State Resort Park.*

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