



WORKSHEET: Developing a Sabbath

Peter Scazzero, "The problem with too many leaders (people in general) is that we allow our work to trespass on every other area of life, disrupting the balanced rhythm of work and rest God created for our good."

Ruth Haley Barton, "Let yourself fall in love with this day so that you long for it as you would a lover. But to fall in love with it you have to try it."

WHEN will my Sabbath be?

Day _____ Start Time _____

Day _____ End Time _____

Consider:

Sunday is certainly traditional, but it doesn't have to be that day.

Sabbath should be regular – every seven days

Like the people of Israel did, consider starting and ending your Sabbath at sundown Sabbath-keeping is not primarily a private, self-indulgent discipline. It is and always has been a communal discipline; therefore it is best to let others know and invite them to participate too.

What will my Sabbath EXCLUDE?

Work. Sabbath is first and foremost a day when we cease all work – paid and unpaid. On the Sabbath we embrace our limits. We let go of the illusion that we are indispensable to the running of the world. We recognize we will never finish all our goals and projects, and that God is on the throne, managing quite well in ruling the universe without our help.

Consider:

- Closing the door on a home office.
- Not checking voicemail or email. Who will need to be informed of this change?
- If I need to stay "busy", what beliefs are driving me?
- Buying and Selling. If we are out buying, selling and engaging in the world of commerce, it means someone has to work and we are contributing to it. It also feeds our consumerism – an aspect of life in our culture that needs rest on the Sabbath. The world of commerce is designed to keep us overstimulated so that we are never satisfied and we unable to delight in the gifts of God that money cannot buy.

- Technology. There is an addictive quality to technology; many studies have been done on the effects of it on the human mind and body. Consider resting from television, text messages, unnecessary phone calls, games, computers, social media – even checking the news.
- Planning/Decision Making. Besides physical work, there is also the emotional and mental hard work that we are engaged in all week long as we try to figure out everything in our life. The Sabbath is an invitation to rest from anything that causes worry and stress such as taxes, budgets, to-do lists, menu planning, wedding planning, major decision-making.

What boundaries do I need in place in order to rest from work?

**What will my Sabbath INCLUDE?
Whatever delights, restores and replenishes you!**

Consider:

- Resting the body: nap, walk, bike, hike, reading, bubble bath, eating good (favorite) food, hobbies, sports, sitting in the sun, lighting candles, listening to beautiful music, lovemaking.
- Replenishing the spirit: As part of observing Sabbath, God invites us to join in the celebration, to enjoy and delight in his creation and all the gifts he offers us in it. These innumerable gifts come to us in many forms, including people, places, and things.
- As part of preparing to practice the Sabbath, one of the most important questions to consider is, “What gives me joy and delight?” This will differ for each of us, but part of the Sabbath invitation is to enjoy and delight in creation and her gifts. It may be the beauty and grandeur of nature, foods (maybe a special meal at the table), special people, games, puzzles, music, art, dance or other creative outlets.
- Restoring the soul: Pondering the love of God is the central focus of our Sabbaths. What makes a Sabbath a biblical Sabbath is that it is “holy to the Lord.” We are not taking time off from God; we are drawing closer to him. Worship in community is important, but also family or individual study, prayer, reading, reflection, solitude, silence, a prayer walk, journaling, drawing, examen of consciousness, moving slowly.

What activities bring me delight and how will I incorporate them?

How do I need to PREPARE for my Sabbath?

In order for it to be more than a day off, we have to be intentional about preparing for it.

Consider:

When will the routine tasks of life be attended to, such as errands, paying bills, cleaning or fixing something around the house, etc.?

Are there any special foods or supplies to purchase?

While we generally focus on a weekly Sabbath, consider how you can develop Sabbath time into your day, month and year.

Finally...

Developing the Sabbath is a PROCESS not a one-time event.

Don't make Sabbath keeping a weighty exercise. Explore it with DELIGHT, as though you and God are learning together how to make the day special for both of you.

Pay attention to your emotions. Notice what you like / don't like; what gives rejuvenates and replenishes / sucks the life out of you and make adjustments as you go.

Remember Jesus' words, "The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

Adapted from Danny Mullins, Sustainable Faith, 2018.