



## Daily Devotionals: Rhythms | April 24, 2022

### Sabbath

When God created Sabbath, it was not for him. God is complete without rest, but he knew we are not. We have limits that are very real and cannot be ignored. We grow tired and weary, and we desperately need to be refreshed, renewed, revived. God modeled this for us in a beautiful and loving way.

Mark Buchanan paints the picture like this: “So, God, knowing both our need and our folly, took the lead. He set the example. Like a parent who coaxes a cranky toddler to lie down for an afternoon nap by lying down beside her, God woos us into rest by resting...God commands that we imitate him in order to discover again that we’re not him, and that we need him<sup>1</sup>.”

When we practice Sabbath, we are reminded of who we are and to whom we belong. We also remember that God is ultimately in control.

Pastor John Mark Comer says, “Sabbath is coming for you either as discipline or delight.” If we don’t choose Sabbath, a form of it chooses us through weariness. So, let’s choose to be anchored by delight instead.

There is a common and simple “formula” for practicing Sabbath: Stop, Rest, Delight, and Worship.

- Stopping: The word shabbat (the Hebrew word for Sabbath) literally means to stop or cease.
- Resting: Rest from work, rest in God—no alarm setting, lots of napping, no worrying
- Delighting: We delight in God, in creation, in people; we enjoy his goodness
- Worshiping: We remember what God’s done and what he’s doing, and we celebrate him

Sabbath is a gift from a God who created you, both with limitations and with built-in desires to be with him. Experiment with Sabbath; try it on and see what kind of gift it will be for you.

### Scripture – Genesis 2:1-3 (NIV)

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God



had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

## **Practices**

Sabbath is one of those things that is great to talk about but hard to actually do. It feels like it requires so much from us, and, if you have kids, it can actually feel downright impossible! With that in mind, here are three ways you can perhaps begin to implement a rhythm of Sabbath into your life. The goal isn't to do all of these. Read through them and pick one that seems doable. The goal is to be with God, to connect with Jesus, not to check something off of a list.

### ***Practice 1 – Prayerful rest inventory***

The first practice is noticing your level of exhaustion, whether you feel well-rested or you're on the ragged edge of tired. Take 10 or 15 minutes as a time of prayer, to ask yourself:

- How exhausted is my heart? Am I pouring out a lot of emotions that are leaving me feeling empty? Is the state of the world or painful experiences of loved ones leaving me feeling drained?
- How exhausted is my soul? Do I feel distant from God due to an over-crowded schedule or as a result of mental or physical exhaustion? Do I feel drained emotionally or spiritually?
- How exhausted is my mind? Do I often suffer fatigue from decision-making or the stress of keeping up with my calendar? Does my mind wander or have a hard time focusing?
- How exhausted is my strength (body)? How tired do I feel when I get up and go through the day? Do I fall asleep when reading or watching TV? Am I too tired to do the things I want or need to do?

### ***Practice 2 – Mini-Sabbath***

For this practice, you will plan a Sabbath by answering some questions about stopping, resting, delighting, and worshipping.

First, imagine what life would be like if you were more fully rested. What would you gain? How would it change how present you would be with people or with your work or activities?



Now, take 20 minutes to answer some of these questions in the four areas of Sabbath. You don't have to answer all of them; the idea is to start picturing what a Sabbath day might look like for you in your current stage of life. As you answer, start where you are in real life, not where you think you should be or where you are in an idealized world.

- **Stopping**  
Make a list of what you could stop on Sabbath. Consider social media viewing, watching the news, screens, or technology in general. Consider avoiding shopping or freezing your purchases for the day. Think about setting aside any house projects or work-related communication.
- **Resting**  
List what's restful to your mind, soul, and body. What's restful for your family? What would you do if you had a free day without anything on the agenda? What activities are renewing for you?
- **Delighting**  
We delight in one another and the beautiful gifts of relationships. We delight in creation, enjoying the beauty of nature. We breathe. We play. We enjoy good food. We linger around the table. Consider how you can delight in God. What would delighting in God look like for you and your family?
- **Worshiping**  
Consider how your family can remember. Maybe you can share the ways you see God working around you right now during a meal. Maybe you have a gratitude wall filled with post-it notes that gets attention on this day. Maybe you put on a worship playlist while you're together and sing at the top of your lungs. What would worshiping God look like for you and your family?

### ***Practice 3 – Sabbath***

The third practice is (you guessed it) the actual practice of Sabbath. Pick a day of the week that works for your household. If a full day is too much to get started with, pick a morning or afternoon. The Jewish Sabbath starts at sundown on Friday and goes through sundown on



Saturday—maybe that would work for you.

- If you've made a list in practice 2, begin to craft your Sabbath.
- Choose one way you will stop, one way you will rest, one way you will delight, and one way you will worship on that day.

And then begin simply. You will probably not be able to implement all your ideas in one Sabbath. Start slow. Take simple steps. Have grace as you begin. There isn't a law for the Sabbath. It's an invitation we've been given to take advantage of as a gift.

**Questions for reflection:**

1. Which practice did you experiment with this week? What was it like for you?
2. How did this practice help you rest and experience God more? Explain.
3. What takeaways or invitations from God as a result of using this practice this week?