

RESONATE CHURCH HUDDLE MATERIAL

**SEMI
CIRCLE**



SEMI CIRCLE

Brief Description:

God made us to work from our rest, not for it. In our busy and full schedules we must learn to work and rest by abiding in Christ and allowing God to bear fruit through us.

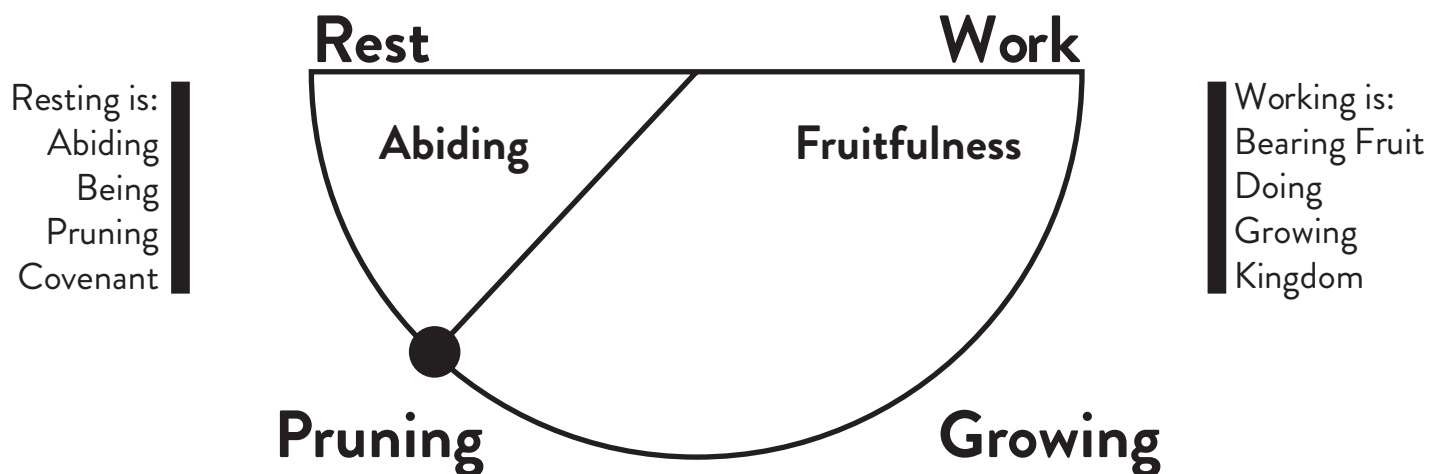
When to use this shape:

People in your huddle are busy, drained, full of anxiety, tired of pursuing Christ and doing work without intentionally resting, or “resting” in unhelpful/lazy/draining ways.

Scripture: John 15:1-8

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful ... Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

Shape:



Description:

“Imagine a pendulum swinging in rhythm—back and forth, to and fro. The shape created by this swinging pendulum is a Semi-Circle. At one end of the pendulum’s arc is fruitfulness. At the other end is rest. We can’t have one without the other. We rest in Christ, then go forth to bear fruit. We bear fruit; then we are pruned back and enter a time of abiding. Rest, work, work, rest.

This shape is important for two reasons: One, we live in a culture of overwork. We are generally over-committed and under-connected. We don’t need more commitments but we do need to be committed to the right things. Two, the opening chapters of Genesis make it clear that God didn’t intend for humans to be overworked and stressed. God created humans on the sixth day, and God gives the humans work to do in the garden. But the seventh day, the first day in which the first humans had after they were created, was a day of rest. Though humans were created to work, God intended rest to receive a priority in our lives. God created humans for work, but we start with a day of rest. We are to work from our rest, not rest from our work.

So rest is good, and work is good. How do we balance the two, and have the right relationship between them? Jesus accomplished this well. He often went off to be alone with the Father or take the disciples away for rest. He started his ministry with a time of abiding in the desert (Matt 4). We tend to start by launching straight into the work and then rest when we burn out! Resting in God, abiding in his presence, is the only way we can be successful in what he has called us to do.

A healthy rhythm looks like this (the pendulum swinging from left to right, then back left):

Abiding (rest) – resting, being in the Father’s presence, being not doing, receiving not producing

Growing (work) – not the end in itself, but an essential part of being healthy.

Fruitfulness (work) – productivity, one important aspect of which is making disciples of others while on mission.

Pruning (rest) – prayerfully reducing our commitments or stopping things that are harmful, creating new space, cutting back stuff which has had its time, or which we need a break from for a while.

It may be tempting to look at our busy lives, think we need more rest, and then just reduce our commitments in order to have more time to do nothing. However, we need to look at our lives from the opposite direction. First, learn how to abide. Spend time reading and meditating on the scripture, praying, quietly listening for God’s voice, worshipping, journaling, and memorizing the scripture. Ask for wisdom on what work God wants you to do. Then, allow Him to empower you to bear fruit - rather than trying to do it on your own. Note that “rest” means “abide” - not “laziness”. Rest should be intentional, engaging our mind in relationship with God, not trying to shut down our mind through mindless activities like bingeing on Netflix. Such “lazy rest” rather than “abiding rest” will actually drain rather than empower you. Rest is not passivity, rest is activity - activity grounded in abiding in God.

When we rest through abiding in him we actually carry that abiding into our work. That’s why the work is fruitful, because our motivation and mindset are in alignment with God, not perverted by our selfishness and self focus. Abiding becomes something we are always doing, both is rest and in work; always attached to the vine, knowing that apart from him we can do nothing.

Application and discussion questions to ask in huddle:

Which side of the semicircle do you tend to more naturally because of personality and environment, resting or working?

Do you struggle to move along the pendulum to the other side?

How do you abide in God?

What needs to be pruned in your life and what needs to be grown?

What does it look like to do good works from your own power versus doing God’s work through His power abiding in you and enabling you to bear fruit?



Resources and Sources:

Geat article on Abiding in Christ: <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/learning-to-abide-in-christ>

Building a Discipling Culture by Mike Breen: https://www.amazon.com/Building-Discipling-Culture-Mike-Breen-ebook/dp/B074FFCZ58/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1502049032&sr=8-2&keywords=building+a+discipling+culture+by+mike+breen

Some Further explanation: <https://passionfruitblog.wordpress.com/2009/09/30/lifeshapes-the-semi-circle/>

