

Practise Sabbath delight



OVERVIEW

The word Sabbath comes from the Hebrew word that means "to cease"/ "to stop working" (in context). The practice of the Sabbath originates from God, and how he rested on the seventh day "after all the work of creation was complete" (see Genesis 2:1-2). It refers to a day set aside each week around which we are to orient our entire lives around rest and focusing on God. This break in the rhythm of the week and distinction from the other six days creates in Pete Scazzero's words "a sacred rhythm of sabbath and work" and a healthy balance in life. Therefore "we work from a place of rest not rest from our work"; a model of Adam's first day as God intended it to be.

On Sabbaths, we imitate God by stopping our work and resting. But the Sabbath in practice is

more than a day off or a holiday; it allows us to recognise our limits and reaffirm our trust and dependence on God, delight in God and the many blessings He has given to us to enjoy (both in nature and people), and to spend unhurried time in reflection and devotion, hearing from Him and deepening our relationship with our loving father. The Sabbath is intended for everyone and all seasons of life; even in difficult moments and challenging seasons, we can trust God for rest and refreshing of our souls (See Psalm 3:5 in the context of the whole chapter; and Matt 11:28-29).

Through the practice of the Sabbath, we get rest for our bodies, souls and all other facets of our lives. The sabbath leaves us being closer to God and being restored/replenished to begin the cycle of our work (lives) again.

Summary

As a spiritual discipline, practicing Sabbath delight involves:

1. Stop (work)
2. Rest
3. Delight
4. Contemplate (on God/worship)

DISCUSSION

Reflect on the four aspects of practicing sabbath delight. Use the list below as a prompt to discuss how you can practically encourage each other to grow in this area.

Stop

- How have you identified a time to practice the Sabbath?
- What makes this day different from the other six?

- What preparation is essential to allow you to stop work?

Rest

- What does a regular rhythm of rest look like for you?
- What boundaries do you set to enable rest (check your "will do" and "will not do" list)
- How comfortable are you letting go and trusting God?

Delight

- What brings you joy and delight?
- How do you expose yourself to and enjoy the beautiful works and blessings of God's creation (nature and people)

Contemplate

- How do you intentionally hear from God and focus on his love?
- How do you celebrate your identity in Christ?

Prayer

Spend time reading and meditating on Psalms 23 & Matt 11:28-29.

Pray over yourself and others in the group so that they will know and experience rest from the Lord.

Further reading

[Pete Scazero \(2010\) "Receive the gift of Sabbath"](#) (a 16-page summary booklet).