

DISCUSSION GUIDE

SUMMER
AT
HILLSIDE

June 4, 2023

The Gift of Sabbath

This Discussion Guide is designed to help you **think more deeply** about the sermon and **engage with others** through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and **allow God to work** in your life as you apply what you discover.

➤ CONVERSATION STARTER

What do you do when you need rest?

➤ EXPLORATION

What is Sabbath? What does it mean to observe a time of Sabbath rest? This is not a term we hear often in our daily lives and it may be an unfamiliar concept to many. Throughout the bible, we read about the importance of God's people observing the Sabbath.

Isaiah 58:13-14 (From your bible, read aloud)

We see here that the result of keeping the Sabbath is joy in the Lord. That sounds great, doesn't it? But we also see some conditions.

- **IF** you call the Sabbath a delight
- **IF** you honor it by not going your own way
- **THEN** your will find your joy in the Lord

What has your experience been with Sabbath?

So what is Sabbath? It is a rhythm of one day a week when we stop and enter into true rest with God. As

we observe Sabbath, we intentionally cease from our work (accomplishing and accumulating).

As we resist the busyness of our world tugging at our hearts and minds, we actively confess that we have limits and we ultimately desire to live into the limitless love of God who cares for us and restores us.

"Sabbath is simply a day to stop: stop working, stop wanting, stop worrying, just STOP."

~John Mark Comer

Genesis 2:1-3 (From your bible, read aloud)

Exodus 20:8-11 (From your bible, read aloud)

What stands out to you from these passages?

God's people are commanded to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. This is a life-giving commandment, not a life-draining one. But it is one that is so different from our culture that we have to be intentional. As we re-read the Isaiah passage, notice that Isaiah is simply reminding God's people of the command that had been given centuries before in Genesis and Exodus.

Isaiah 58:13-14 (From your bible, read aloud)

Sabbath is not only mentioned in the Old Testament but also in the New Testament. Jesus instructs his followers about the true meaning of Sabbath in the book of Mark.

Mark 2:27-28 (From your bible, read aloud)

Jesus did not do away with the Sabbath, however he did speak out strongly about legalism and rule keeping that had become part of the “tradition”. He reminded God’s people that Sabbath is a gift. He clarifies that the Sabbath is meant to be a time to stop, rest, delight and worship God.

What would need to change in your life to regularly observe Sabbath?

“If we do not allow for a rhythm of rest in our overly busy lives, illness becomes our Sabbath, accidents become our Sabbath—all these types of things will create / demand a Sabbath.” ~Wayne Muller

The Spirit and Attitude of Sabbath

- Learning to **admit** and **confess** that we are not in control
- Establishing rhythms of **work** and **rest**
- Establishing rhythms of **renewal** and **trust** in God each week - through scripture

Which of these is most challenging for you?

Examples of Sabbath Mindset

- **Psalm 37** - Commit, trust, delight & rest
- **Psalm 46** - Be still and know God
- **Psalm 24** - Clean hands, pure heart, no trust in idols

Our choices with Sabbath keeping not only impact us, but everyone around us. When we observe Sabbath it can transform the way we interact with God and with the people around us. It changes us as we rest in God.

SABBATH IS: by Adele Calhoun

- Its *Ceasing* deepens our repentance for the many ways that we fail to trust God and try to create our own future.
- Its *Resting* strengthens our faith in the totality of his grace.
- Its *Embracing* invites us to take the truths of our faith and apply them practically in our values and lifestyles.
- Its *Feasting* heightens our sense of eschatological hope - the Joy of our present

experience of God’s love is a celebration practice.

What questions do you still have about Sabbath? How will you intentionally learn and grow in this practice?

There are many excellent resources available to help us better understand and practice Sabbath.

- The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry ~JM Comer
- Sacred Rhythms ~Ruth Haley Barton
- Mudhouse Sabbath ~Lauren Winner

“Because we do not rest, we lose our way. We miss the compass points that would show us where to go, we bypass the nourishment that would give us true support. We miss the quiet that would give us wisdom. We miss the joy and love born of effortless delight.”

Holy Spirit, help me to rest today and, as I do so, give me wisdom. I welcome Your presence and revelation within my life. Converse with my spirit so that the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart may be acceptable in Your sight today.” ~Wayne Muller

> TAKE AWAY

A Prayer of Blessing for the day of Sabbath:

May this day bring Sabbath rest to your heart and your home.

May God’s image in you be restored, and your imagination in God be re-stored.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May you know grace to embrace your own finite smallness in the arms of God’s infinite greatness.

May God’s Word feed you and His Spirit lead you into the week and into the life to come.

~Pete Greig

Take some time to pray together, asking God to help you grow in the practice of keeping Sabbath. Make a plan to take a time of Sabbath rest this week.