

## SUGGESTED SABBATH PRACTICES

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In his book *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, Pete Scazzero helps us think about keeping a 24-hour Sabbath by **stopping, resting, delighting, and contemplating**. Below you'll find suggested practices for each of these four categories, followed by some special considerations for singles and for families.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive or definitive. Be creative and consider your own situation and personality, and your needs for this season of life. However, do consider engaging each category. Faithful practice of all four would be a good indicator that you are adopting a culture of Sabbath-keeping. Faithful Sabbath-keeping is more than just not working; it's also meant to evoke freedom, not legalism.

Mark Buchanan writes in *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath*, "Sabbath is both a day and an attitude to nurture . . . stillness. It is both time on a calendar and a disposition of the heart. It is **a day we enter, but just as much a way we see**. Sabbath imparts the rest of God—actual physical, mental, spiritual rest, but also the *rest* of God—the things of God's nature and presence we miss in our busyness."

### For All

#### Stopping

- Stop worrying and instead cast your cares to the Lord. (This idea comes from Gordon Smith.) List or write on separate slips of paper the items or people or situations that weigh heavily on you. One by one, with intention, turn over each of these to Jesus.
- Do not send or read emails related to work. Refrain from school work or studying.
- Go screenless for 24 hours.
- Be free to not shop. This can stir a sense of gratitude for what you already have and give you freedom from wanting or even coveting what you may not need. Plus, it also gives others a chance to Sabbath.

#### Resting

- Take a nap.
- If you tend toward being competitive, try a more leisurely pace. Drive more slowly. Walk more slowly. Talk less.
- Read for pleasure, especially something that encourages, lightens your spirit, or inspires you. Consider Wendell Berry's Sabbath poems.
- Rest from media: news, advertisements, etc.
- Free yourself from multitasking and experience the pleasure of giving your attention to one thing or one person. (Baab talks about this on pp. 58-59.)

#### Delighting

- Enjoy a leisurely, agenda-less conversation with a friend or loved one.
- Enjoy special foods, plates and dishes, or decor, but refrain from invoking the spirit of Martha Stewart. Try eating more slowly to savor food.
- Explore a new hobby. Make art. Learn a new dance move.
- Take a walk or hike in nature, fly a kite, play on the beach, kayak. If you are training for a race, consider how or if you will enter into your training regimen on the Sabbath (see Baab, p. 64, for an example).
- Take time to notice things, to ponder. Attend.

### Contemplating

- Mark the beginning and ending of Sabbath by lighting a candle and saying a prayer and/or having a reading. (Suggested reading: Wendell Berry's Sabbath poems, selections from any book on Sabbath, or a psalm.)
- Take extra time to leisurely be with God in prayer. Consider setting aside a chunk of time to listen to God, bringing a specific question to him.
- Buchanan suggests a wise person may raise these questions on a Sabbath: *Does the path I'm walking lead to a place I want to go? If I keep heading this way, will I like where I arrive?*
- At the end of the Sabbath period, name the gifts that came to you in the time.

### Additional Suggestions Especially for Singles

Lynne Baab's got a great chapter in *Sabbath Keeping* titled "Going It Alone," which may be very helpful to those wondering how to practice Sabbath as a single.

- In advance, make a plan for how you will spend Sabbath. Consider what will be healthy and life-giving. Be aware of if you need time alone with God or with others.
- Join with other singles to intentionally celebrate Sabbath together. Interact with each other rather than screens: talking, storytelling, walking, bike riding, playing games. Intentionally direct meal conversations toward God. *What did God reveal to you this week about himself? Where did you spot God this week?*
- If being with a family is important to you, consider asking to join a family for their Sabbath meal.
- Be intentional about marking the beginning and ending of Sabbath.

### Additional Suggestions for Families

*How can I have a Sabbath?!! You don't know what it's like to care for young children who depend on me 24/7! When we keep Sabbath, we do not take a break from loving those under our care. Remember, Jesus did good on the Sabbath. Think about how you will model rest, delight, and dependence on God for your children.*

### Stopping

- Keep food simple.
- Plan quality time that involves interacting with each other rather than screens: talking, storytelling, puzzling, playing board games.

### Resting

- When kids are a little older, practice a "slow" morning: everyone gets their own breakfast and then reads or has Quiet Time or journals at a leisurely pace. Choose a time to come together.

### Delighting

- Invite friends over to share a meal with you. (One family makes special pizza on Friday evening—the beginning of their Sabbath. The whole family gets involved in the preparation and cooking, and an open invitation is extended to friends to join in.)
- Where it's feasible and life-giving, be aware of singles in your community who might enjoy time with your family and vice versa.
- As a possible beginning or ending of Sabbath, bless each other. Have a family member hold another family member's face in their hands, look them in the eyes, and say a brief blessing over them. Continue around so that each member both gives and receives a blessing.

### Contemplating

- Intentionally direct meal conversations toward God. *What did God reveal to you this week about himself? Where did you spot God this week?*
- When children are young, take an extra few minutes when you lay them down for a nap, and as you watch them fall asleep bring to mind the gifts God has given you.