



A Day to Delight

This year as we journey through **Summer Sabbath** together, we want to help you experience **rest** and establish habits of **delight** in your life. One of the most effective and time-tested ways to do that is through the weekly practice of Sabbath. This ancient habit is one we believe is still relevant today for us as followers of Jesus.

The literal translation of the word "Sabbath" is to stop. If we're honest, many of us struggle to slow down, put the demands aside, leave things unfinished, and cease striving. It's this tension God wants to speak into with His grace. By practicing Sabbath, we exchange our exhaustion for His rest - slowing down reminds us there's only one God, and we're not it.

Yet, Sabbath is more than simply stopping; it's also about finding joy and discovering delight by centering our attention and affection on God. The prophet Isaiah goes as far as to say that "if you call the Sabbath a delight....then you will find your joy in the Lord" (Isaiah 58:13-14).

We make room for delight as we cease striving and pull away from the pressure to hustle, perform, and achieve, which is more important than we realize because what we delight in will determine what we desire. And ultimately, our hearts' desires will influence our lives' direction.

To encourage you to make Sabbath a weekly practice in your own life and to show you how to Sabbath, we are taking a "Sabbath Sunday" together as a church. Sabbath Sunday is a Sunday where we don't gather at any of our campuses in order to collectively take time to stop, to rest, and to delight. Our hope is that by not gathering this Sunday we will all have space to discover what a weekly Sabbath could look like in our own lives going forward. For many of us, Sundays might be the ideal day to practice a Sabbath, with the Sunday Gathering being a vital part of the day.

The reality is that practicing Sabbath will look different for each of us because our lives, life stages, family dynamics, and circumstances are all unique. But the beauty of this invitation to rest and practice the Sabbath isn't found in following a list of rules; it resides in a relationship with God and His concern that our souls would experience rest. Jesus went as far as saying, "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the

Sabbath." No matter what you do or how long you do it, be intentional, be mindful of God, and trust that even as you practice imperfectly, God can perfectly provide just what you need.

Below we've provided various suggestions to help you rest, refresh, and refuel this Sabbath Sunday, including a specific section for families. We are excited to hear what God does as we all practice a Sabbath as a church scattered around our cities, region, and even around the world!

SABBATH SUGGESTIONS

Prepare - In ancient Jewish culture, the day preceding the Sabbath was "Preparation Day." Sabbath takes preparation to be enjoyed thoroughly, so before you get to Sunday, take some time to prepare. Do the necessary prep work before so that you can be fully engaged during the day: go grocery shopping and stock your kitchen with good food, clean or pick up your house or apartment, and answer important emails or messages.

Pause - The Sabbath is an opportunity to stop working, stop wanting, stop worrying, and rest in God's presence. We encourage you to consider turning off or limiting your time on your phone and computer so you can be free from distractions and actively participate in experiences that are life-giving to your soul.

Plan - To set up your Sabbath Sunday for success, pre-decide how much time you can set apart for Sabbath and plan out a loose schedule for the day. You can practice Sabbath starting on Saturday at 6pm through Sunday at 6pm, all day Sunday, or by set aside several hours on Sunday. Consider what can set this day apart from your typical routine. Also, decide how you can intentionally begin and end your Sabbath, for example you could light a candle or begin and end the day with a simple prayer. As you contemplate the shape of your Sabbath Sunday, use these three focal points to help guide your day:

- **God** - *How can you carve out intentional quiet time to connect with God through prayer, Scripture reading, worship music, or journaling?* Explore the various ways that help you feel closer to God.
- **Self** - *How will you allow yourself time to rest and engage in activities that bring you joy and rejuvenation?* Whether it's taking a nap, going for a walk, or pursuing a hobby, prioritize what uplifts your soul and replenishes your energy.
- **Others** - *How can you set aside moments to cultivate intentional community and enjoy life with others?* This could involve sharing a meal, playing a game, or simply cherishing each other's company. Consider how you can extend an invitation to others to join you in your Sabbath experience.

Presence - At its foundation, Sabbath is a day of presence - a time to be fully present with God, others, and ourselves. Sabbath invites us to wholeness by encouraging us to be present in one place at a time. When we disconnect from worldly obligations and distractions, we create space to focus on spiritual revitalization, togetherness, and personal reflection.

Permission - Embrace the awkwardness of keeping the Sabbath. In a world that glorifies constant busyness, slowing down and observing a day of rest can feel uncomfortable. However, navigating unfamiliar territory, setting boundaries, and saying no to conflicting demands creates space for more profound spiritual growth and connection. It's natural for these initial moments to feel strange and unfamiliar, so give yourself grace and space to experiment - you're practicing the Sabbath, not perfecting it.

Process - In the following week, we encourage you to reflect on your Sabbath Sunday experience. Processing what you learned and encountered during the Sabbath is valuable as you continue practicing it in the future. Reflect on the insights, lessons, and moments of spiritual growth. Journaling can be a helpful tool to record your thoughts, emotions, and any new perspectives gained. Engage in conversations with loved ones, sharing your experiences and listening to theirs. Allow yourself space for introspection, gratitude, and integrating the Sabbath's teachings into your daily life, carrying its wisdom forward.

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

Our desire is to embrace rest, establish healthier rhythms, and cultivate a deeper trust in God. Yet, we acknowledge that practicing Sabbath with young children can seem contradictory and challenging, making us question if it's even feasible in this season of life. However, the truth is that there are indeed opportunities to engage in Sabbath as a family. It is a rhythm that all of us, including our children, are designed to participate in regularly. For our parents, here are some suggestions on how to do Sabbath Sunday as a family:

- Read a family devotion or a story from the Bible (We love the “Jesus Storybook Bible”).
- Ask your children what brings them delight and figure out ways to incorporate their answers.
- Plan a special meal or dessert and make it together.
- Take a walk in your neighborhood or the park without electronics or have a family game night.
- Watch a sunrise or sunset together.
- Listen to worship music.
- Spend time with friends or extended family.