

# Practicing Sabbath:

## The Power of Rest

*“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me— watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”*

**Matthew 11:28-31 (The Message)**

Monday: Planning For Sabbath  
Tuesday: Reflection: Who Am I?  
Wednesday: Sabbath Training: End Times & Margins  
Thursday: Mini Practice: Peace In The Storm  
Friday: Bible Reflection: Isaiah 40:28-31  
Saturday: Sabbath Training: Emotional Burdens  
Sunday: Sabbath Rest

**While Sunday is a common day to choose, any day of the week can be your Sabbath. Consider the rhythm of your own life and decide on a Sabbath day here:**

---

*(If it’s not going to be Sunday, just swap Sunday out with your chosen day on the plan to the left)*

### **Sabbath Principles:**

- 1. Choose Rest**
  - *No thinking, talking, or planning work*
- 2. Choose Renewal**
  - *Do your favourite life-giving things*
- 3. Choose Reverence**
  - *Worship, reorient your heart to God in everything you do*

## Monday

### Planning For Sabbath

**To be able to cease all work for one day requires some intentional planning and work ahead of time. Use this worksheet today to prepare for your Sabbath day later this week.**

#### Sabbath Box

Designate a Sabbath Box. Think about what things will go into the box. Put a pen and notepad or scraps of paper with the box, so you can symbolically put in non-tangible troubles as well. \* *Note: You're not using the Sabbath Box yet, only preparing supplies.*

#### Food

If food-prep is a burden and not joy to you, what prep needs to be done the day before?

#### Messages

Do you need to put an autoresponder on your email/social to let others know you will be unavailable? If this enables you to more easily detach from work pressure, do it!

#### Rest

What work (including home) will you need to stop and rest from on Sabbath? **List Here:**

#### Renewal

What activities renew and refresh your spirit, bringing you closer to Jesus, helping you to celebrate the goodness of God and his creation? What do you love to do?? **List Here:**

#### Reverence

What practices or activities will you participate in to engage reverence and worship in a deeper way during Sabbath? **List Here:**

**\* Secret Hack for Workaholics:** Let someone close know you are planning to practice Sabbath, inviting them to help keep you accountable for staying in "Rest, Renewal, Reverence" mode.

**Reflection: Who Am I?**

*“Only in ceasing to do can we realize that we are safely more than all we do.” – Dallas Willard*

The prospect of a Sabbath – the command to rest – should come as one of the purest highlight joys of our faith; instead it seems to be one of the most ignored and disrespected commands from God.

For many, the root of that dilemma is an unsettling question: **“Who am I, if I don’t work, and don’t worry?”** (Have you ever even met that version of yourself?)

Sabbath Rest is an invitation to leave behind the noise, pressure and chaos of this world, and enter into a deeper experience of who God is, and who we are in God. The revelations on the other side of that journey are good – even if it takes a trust fall to get there!

**1. What stops you from practicing a full Sabbath rest each week?**

---

---

---

**2. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much is your identity tied to what you do for work? \_\_\_\_\_**

**3. Recognizing that our work is a God-given blessing from which much good comes, in what ways might this attachment also be a negative force in your life?**

---

---

---

**4. Apart from any roles you occupy or work you do, what can you say about who you are?**

---

---

---

**Meditation: The Father’s Love Letter (Remix)**

[southridgechurch.ca/spiritualpractices/meditations/](http://southridgechurch.ca/spiritualpractices/meditations/) (\*choose Father’s Love Letter – Remix)

Ask God to open your heart up to the truth of your identity as you experience this meditation.

**As you explore Sabbath principles this week,** try to actively dislodge the lie in your mind that says your worth is in what you can do. Your true value is so much deeper and higher than that!

### Sabbath Training: End Times & Margins

We live in a world obsessed with productivity; we are almost always either consuming or producing in some form. We've become addicted to 24/7 culture, regardless of the anxiety and exhaustion it produces!

These practices below are not the same as Sabbath, but they will help train us for Sabbath, un-hitching us from the compulsions of relentless motion and productivity.

#### Create End Times

Resist the pull towards 24/7 activity by creating an end-time to your work day.

- Decide (ahead) when you will finish work each day, and then STOP; turning off the email, messages, and devices that would otherwise keep you connected to your tasks. And then... don't go back to them. Close the door to your home office or workspace.
- Intentionally close out your work time by prayerfully expressing something like this: ***"I've done my best, but now it's time to stop. I will entrust what I cannot do to the God who is ultimately in charge of it all; it's all yours now, God."*** Do this as a spiritual practice, ending your work and releasing it to God for safe-keeping.
- Consider doing the same in your parenting and relational roles as well each night, perhaps as you put your children to bed or as you leave an encounter with a friend, entrusting the relational investment you've made into God's hands now to carry.

#### Experiment With Margins

- Plan buffer time between meetings, appointments, home responsibilities (& don't fill it!)
- Stand in line (or wait anywhere) without checking or scrolling your phone
- Eat your meals without any screens or reading material in front of you
- Sit longer than necessary at the table after eating
- Drive the speed limit... in the slow lane
- While watching a movie (or working) don't also hold your phone in your hand
- Plan intentional 'white space' into your day – time to do nothing but breathe and relax
- Only shop once a week
- Wake up earlier so you can enjoy an unhurried start to the day
- Listen to a whole album front to back, without doing anything else
- Give up social media for 48 hours and watch margin magically appear in your day

Listen for the whisper of both God and your own soul in the increased quietness of your life.

**Bonus Activity:** Check out the book “24/6: A Prescription for a Healthier, Happier Life” by Matthew Sleeth [www.youtube.com/watch?v=SY7FkIZ7USw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SY7FkIZ7USw)

## Thursday

### Mini-Practice: Peace In The Storm

**Contemplate** (From Sunday): *“So long as we only ever work, we will never allow God to do the thing that God can only do uniquely when we rest.”* What do you think about this idea that God has endowed rest – particularly Sabbath – with the power to refresh, rejuvenate, reorient, refocus and restore us in a way that simply **will not happen** if we won’t stop working?

**Mini-Sabbath Experience:** As you take in this 8-minute mini-Sabbath-like experience below, choose to intentionally release the compulsion to try to control both the circumstances and outcomes of your life; consciously place your trust in God instead; and then simply rest in the awareness that you are held in the palm of his hand, every hour of every day.

**Peace In The Storm:** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jRHYFqMvT0&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jRHYFqMvT0&feature=youtu.be)

## Friday

### Bible Reflection: Isaiah 40:28-31

**Read this passage out loud (even if only in a whisper):**

Do you not know?  
Have you not heard?  
The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He will not grow tired or weary,  
and his understanding no one can fathom.  
He gives strength to the weary  
and increases the power of the weak.  
Even youths grow tired and weary,  
and young men stumble and fall;  
but those who hope in the LORD  
will renew their strength.  
They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint.

**Isaiah 40:28-31 (NIV)**

## Reflection

1. What parts of life make you feel most weary? Take a minute to jot them down.
  
2. Look at your list. What would it feel like to literally hand those things completely over to God for 1 day out of every 7 – to experience a complete reprieve from them; physically, mentally and emotionally?

## Talk To God

Pray and simply ask God to lift those things off of your heart for 1 day every 7, on your Sabbath. Ask for his help to learn how to *let them* be lifted off.

## Bonus Points

If you need additional encouragement that God is indeed Big Enough – take an extra 5 minutes to read all of Isaiah 40.

## Saturday

### Sabbath Training: Emotional Burdens

***“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” Revelation 21:4 (NIV)***

**Practicing Sabbath requires us to learn the art of releasing.** In order to experience a taste of eternity on earth, ask yourself: What kind of work do I need to set down?

Recognizing the physical work we need to stop is often easier than identifying the thoughts and feelings we need to release as well. Today, give some consideration to the latter.

What kind of emotional burdens do you tend to carry that don't belong in heaven?

- Stress
- Sadness
- Grief
- Guilt
- Worry
- Fear
- Anger
- **Others?**

It's not wrong to experience some of those things here on earth. That's some of the work of being human in the here and now. But if the Sabbath is about experiencing eternity, we have to set those burdens down one day in seven, just as we set our tools down.

**Which of the above emotions will be hard for you to release on the Sabbath?**

---

**What could you do on your Sabbath to remind and reinforce your commitment to lay these specific things down? (A verse or some kind of anchor/reminder, ask a friend to help you, etc.)**

---

As you listen to this song below, invite God to lift the weariness and burdens of life off of you, allowing you to taste and see more clearly his truth that in the end, redemption will indeed win.

**Worn by Tenth Avenue North [www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzC2IT93x54](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzC2IT93x54) (4 minutes)**

## Sunday

### Sabbath Rest

**A day to experience and revel in the life of eternity, before we actually get there.**

Today, actively resist participating in the economic engine that drives our society by producing nothing, and only consuming what is truly necessary. Instead point your mind and heart toward the things of eternity, and life in God's Kingdom as it will one day be.

#### 1. Rest

- *No thinking, talking, or planning work*
- *This includes home and family work that is burdensome*
- *Rest and freedom from all that oppresses*

#### 2. Renewal

- *Do your favourite life-giving things that bring you closer to Jesus*
- *Consider getting outdoors into nature – reveling in God's very good creation*

#### 3. Reverence

- *Worship in a deeper more intentional way, ideally experienced in community*
- *Reorient your heart to God in everything else you do all day long, as well*

*I heard a voice thunder from the Throne: “Look! Look! God has moved into the neighborhood, making his home with men and women! They’re his people, he’s their God. He’ll wipe every tear from their eyes. Death is gone for good—tears gone, crying gone, pain gone—all the first order of things gone.” The Enthroned continued, “Look! I’m making everything new. Write it all down—each word dependable and accurate.”*

**Revelation 21:3-5 (VOICE)**

### **Put Down Your Tools, And Your Troubles**

Use your Sabbath box to place into it all of the things that signify (or tempt you to) work – laptop, homework, projects, cell phone (just TRY!), To-Do List, bills, credit cards, etc.

Take a minute to think of the emotional burdens or stresses you are carrying right now, jot each one down on a piece of paper and place them into the box as well – entrusting God to carry these cares completely on your behalf for this day.

(\*Put into the box the lie that your worth is in what you can do, if you need to as well. Just don’t bother taking that one out after Sabbath is over.\*)

**Now go enjoy God and God’s crazy abundant provision.  
Let joy and peace and hope reign in your heart!**