



# SABBATH GROUPS

**Group Goal:** Identify current practices of Sabbath and begin to explore broader theological understandings, and introduce first group practice during the week.



## Warm-up Questions

- Name/Vocation or Area of Study
- Favorite thing to do with one hour of free time?

## Reflection about Sabbath

- When you think of the word "Sabbath," what words, pictures, or practices come to mind?
- Where did those words, pictures, or practices come from?



## DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SABBATH

**Scripture for Reflection: *Genesis 1:27–2:2***

- Based on this passage (and the flow of Genesis), what is the connection between rest and the image of God?
- In this passage, God gives the first humans a concept of Sabbath as meaningful work and fruitful rest. How do those two relate to one another?
- In this passage, God works, God stops to rest, then God goes back to work.
  - What does it look like to have an "end" to work, even when there's more to do?
  - What's your routine for sliding from work to rest?
  - What's your routine for heading back to work?
  - What "tweak" might help your routine be more fruitful?
- Based on your current routines, this passage, or our conversation, what's something new you're noticing about Sabbath?

**Note:** These questions and explorations remind us that Sabbath is a prophetic act of faith--God keeps working when we don't.

- Not just about our refreshment, but our humility and faith in God's ongoing work in the world.



## SABBATH ENGAGEMENT *THIS WEEK*

### Putting into Practice

- Where do you connect with God? Is there an accessible physical space that has been beneficial for you to be in the past when connecting with God?
- What marks the “end” of one week and the “beginning” of another in your life (where do you notice most of your energy depleted)?
- Where in your schedule do you cease?

### Growing pains

Think about talking with a friend about the questions above, or write some of the answers down. Note when you feel most tired and when you’re able to have a pause.

### How might we pray for each other?

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### Personal reflection this week

- When in your life have you felt most connected with God, self, and others? What about that was refreshing?
- What activities help you find new energy for “pray and play,” in which you find yourself connected with God and others?



## FIND YOUR OUTLET

*We all learn differently and at different paces so find time this week to choose a resource from below and learn more about sabbath as provision.*

### ARTICLES

- [“Keys to the Kingdom”](#)

### PODCASTS

- [Four Reasons to Keep Sabbath - Marva Dawn on Keeping Sabbath \(Video\)](#)
- [Sabbath as Resistance - Interview with Walter Brueggemann about Sabbath](#)

### PRAYERS

- [Guided Sabbath Prayer](#)

### RECIPES

- [Blueberry Oatmeal Bars](#)



# Week 1

## SABBATH AS PROVISION



### Warm-up Questions

- Name/Vocation or Area of Study
- What's an experience you'd love to save up for someday?

### Reflection on Previous Week's Practice

- Where have you seen God's presence this past week (in your Sabbath practice, maybe, or something else)?



### DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SABBATH

#### Scripture for Reflection: *Exodus 16:4-30*

- Now that we don't see manna and quail falling from the sky, how do we see God providing for us things that we can't produce for ourselves?
- How does that relate to Sabbath?
- Where do you (like the folks who took more manna) allow fear of not having enough to control your decisions?
- How often do you find rest feeling negligent to you (almost like it's just a luxury)? How might you move toward rest being an act of faith?
- How might small, unexpected "sablots" in your day--little "pockets of time" be restful for you?



## SABBATH ENGAGEMENT *THIS WEEK*

### Putting into Practice

Try something adventurous or new; make room for spontaneity in your schedule, and take advantage of that margin.

### Growing pains

Part of Sabbath is becoming attentive to God’s work in moments that are outside our control and beyond our own effort. God delights in his children’s delight. This week, stretch toward releasing control--toward trust in God’s provision through play and unplanned moments.

### How might we pray for each other?

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### Personal reflection this week

- What place does spontaneity and adventure have in your everyday life?
- If you want more of it, what holds you back?
- If you like more planned structure, how are those structures bringing life?
- Sabbath makes room for us to be more present to the lives of the people God gives us. How are you “making room” for others in your life?



## FIND YOUR OUTLET

*We all learn differently and at different paces so find time this week to choose a resource from below and learn more about sabbath as provision.*

### ARTICLES

- [“A Cloud of Witnesses”](#)
- [“Spirituality and Play”](#)

### PODCASTS

- [The Bible Project: Hebrews, Invitation to Rest](#)

### PRAYERS

- [A Liturgy for Feasting with Friends](#)
- [The Prayer of Examen](#)

### RECIPES

- [Pineapple Salsa](#)





# Week 2

## SABBATH & COMMUNITY



### Warm-up Questions

- Name/Vocation or Area of Study
- What's something you've been freshly grateful for recently?

### Reflection on Previous Week's Practice

- Where have you seen God's presence this past week (in your Sabbath practice, maybe, or something else)?



### DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SABBATH

**Scripture for Reflection: *Matthew 12:1-13, 46-50***

- Based on this passage/your previous experience, what's the relationship between work and Sabbath?
- How does Jesus' definition of "family" reframe your own definition?
- What would "rest as a family" look like when you're in community with other believers?
- Where do you find the "seedlings" of that kind of rest in your routine now?
- Who has shown you what it means to rest well with people, not just work well with people?
- What does it look like for you to know when you're resting with people vs. serving people? What's the relationship between those two and Sabbath?



## SABBATH ENGAGEMENT *THIS WEEK*

### Putting into Practice

Practice Sabbath through retreating with restful people, or healthy self-care you don't always give yourself permission for. Do something refreshing.

### Growing pains

As much as we focus on our work, part of becoming Christlike means withdrawing and finding small ways of delighting, of "tasting and seeing" God's goodness.

### How might we pray for each other?

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## FIND YOUR OUTLET

*We all learn differently and at different paces so find time this week to choose a resource from below and learn more about sabbath and community.*

### ARTICLES

- ["The Lord's Supper"](#)
- ["How Christians Can Experience Deeper Rest"](#)
- ["Encountering the One True God in Solitude"](#)

### PRAYERS

- [The Prayers of the People - 384](#)  
*The Book of Common Prayer*
- [Rediscovering the Ignatian Examen](#)

### RECIPES

- [Homemade Bread](#)

### Personal reflection this week

- How is your engagement with solitude right now? Do you usually find it to be a joyful thing that brings delight, or a taxing thing that causes you to feel lonely? What do you need to gain more fruitfulness from this practice?
- How is your engagement with community right now? Do you find yourself taxed by most of your interactions, or find that your cup is refilled by being around the people you've chosen (or that your schedule demands)? What would more fruitful belonging in community look like this week?
- What people make you more like Christ? How might you thank them and draw closer to these people?



# Week 3

## SABBATH & BLESSING



### Warm-up Questions

- Name/Vocation or Area of Study
- What's the most minor award you've ever won?

### Reflection on Previous Week's Practice

- Where have you seen God's presence this past week (in your Sabbath practice, maybe, or something else)?



### DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SABBATH

#### Scripture for Reflection: *Exodus 20:8-11*

- The text says "the Lord blessed the Sabbath." What's the relationship between rest and blessing?
- When people talk about God's goodness or blessing, what comes to mind for you?
- What about that are you happy with?
- What about that do you need to rebuild?
- Sabbath is the first thing in Scripture that God refers to as "holy." What does it mean for time to be holy? What moments have been most "holy" in your life?
- When you've ignored rest, how has it affected your life?
- How do you talk about the story of God's work in your life? (How do you remind yourself of what God has done? How does rest help?)



## SABBATH ENGAGEMENT *THIS WEEK*

### Putting into Practice

Identify things God has done in your life; bask in grace.

### Growing pains

We often measure success by ways our activity yields results, but Sabbath is countercultural in this way. It reminds us that part of fruitfulness is ceasing--in identifying ways God's activity produces more than we might have hoped for or done ourselves.

### How might we pray for each other?

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### Personal reflection this week

- In what ways has God's work been forming you recently?
- When do you find yourself turning your time with God into an "achievement streak"? When do you find yourself able to connect with God without turning it into an achievement?



## FIND YOUR OUTLET

*We all learn differently and at different paces so find time this week to choose a resource from below and learn more about sabbath and community.*

### ARTICLES

- ["Letting God Run Things Without My Help" by Barbara Brown Taylor](#)
- ["Why People Can't Rest - Human Nature Revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures"](#)

### PRAYERS

- [Praise to the King of Creation](#)

### RECIPES

- [Crock Pot Goulash](#)



# Week 4

## SABBATH & HEALING



### Warm-up Questions

- Name/Vocation or Area of Study
- What's an interest you have that you think we'd be surprised by?

### Reflection on Previous Week's Practice

- Where have you seen God's presence this past week (in your Sabbath practice, maybe, or something else)?



### DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SABBATH

#### Scripture for Reflection: **Luke 14:1-14**

- In Jesus' mind here, what's the relationship between rest and healing?
- What do you think is the relationship between Sabbath and humility?
- Where have you seen people get so caught up on the specifics of Sabbath-keeping that they missed its heart?
- Who have you seen serve others well as part of Sabbath? What made that true about them?
- How might practicing Sabbath be healing--creating flourishing, correcting wrongs, and helping others come to know God more fully?
- The end of our passage seems to connect Sabbath with pushing back from the places of honor at the table and making room for the ones we often overlook. In what ways might your engagement with Sabbath create space for those you often exclude?





## SABBATH ENGAGEMENT *THIS WEEK*

### Putting into Practice

Identify things God has done in your life; bask in grace. Express gratitude to people in your life, identify a list of things you're grateful for, and sit and listen to someone else's story.

### Growing pains

We focus so much on rest as a personal discipline that we often miss opportunities to rest by pouring out, listening, expressing gratitude, and identifying how God's movement in our lives comes through the people He gives us.

### How might we pray for each other?

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## FIND YOUR OUTLET

*We all learn differently and at different paces so find time this week to choose a resource from below and learn more about sabbath and community.*

### ARTICLES

- ["Work, Rest, and Play"](#) by Ben Witherington
- ["Redrawing the Lines of God"](#) by Richard Rohr

### PRAYERS

- [Sabbath Liturgy](#)

### RECIPES

- [Mississippi Pot Roast](#)

### Personal reflection this week

- What ways of service to those "outside your family" might be appropriate within your practice of Sabbath?
- Who has shown up in your life that you're grateful for this week? What gifts have they given you? How might you similarly show up for others with the gifts you bring?
- How might you make the practice of gratitude a more central part of your life? When would the practice of naming things you're grateful for help center your life most? (At a particular time of day, such as morning, noontime, or evening? When you feel most anxious? When you feel most calm?)



# Week 5

## SABBATH & DELIGHTING



### Warm-up Questions

- Name/Vocation or Area of Study
- What's the most minor award you've ever won?

### Reflection on Previous Week's Practice

- Where have you seen God's presence this past week (in your Sabbath practice, maybe, or something else)?



### DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SABBATH

**Scripture for Reflection: *Proverbs 8:27-36***

- How do you see Sabbath creating "order" in your life, or in the world?
- This passage describes wisdom filling us with "delight day after day." How can the things of God be instruments of delight? How might that change your approach to them?
- How do we keep the pursuit of wisdom from becoming the pursuit of control?
- Wisdom without relationship is just a safety blanket; how does releasing control lead us to wisdom in community?
- The passage talks about "those who find God finding life and receiving favor from the Lord," while those who fail to find God, "harming themselves." What does it mean to "find God," and how might we know if He's bringing life? What are some of the indicators?
- When you've felt resistant to what God calls you to do, how have people helped you sort through how to move forward?



## SABBATH ENGAGEMENT *THIS WEEK*

### Putting into Practice

Focus on vulnerability and laughter this week. Schedule a therapy session, a time with a friend, or other group gathering in which you feel safe, heard, and able to let loose.

### Growing pains

Part of Sabbath's purpose is to know and be known--to be examined by God, and pressed into by others. This requires vulnerability, but also offers the chance for self-forgetfulness, loosening up, and realizing that because God only has fallen people to work with, we can rejoice, open up to, and support each other in being people of new life.

### How might we pray for each other?

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### Personal reflection this week

- In what spaces do you feel most safe, known, and loved?
- Where have you found yourself laughing with abandon this past week?
- Where are you finding resistance (in your own heart, in your life) to the things God is calling you to become/do/say?



## FIND YOUR OUTLET

*We all learn differently and at different paces so find time this week to choose a resource from below and learn more about sabbath and community.*

### ARTICLES

- ["Laughter of Biblical Proportions"](#) by Frederick Buechneer and Richard Foster

### PRAYERS

- "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you are the one who brings wholeness--and part of wholeness is delight in you. Every good thing--the kind eyes of a friend, cordial smile of a stranger, the volunteer comforting the hospice patient, the wholesome meal nourishing the stomach--is a reflection of your goodness. Guide me toward you this week through the people you've given me to love; and help me be a blessing to someone along the way. Amen."

### RECIPES

- [Homemade Popsicles](#)



# Week 6

## SABBATH & CONTROL



### Warm-up Questions

- Name/Vocation or Area of Study
- What's a fear you have that you think is totally irrational?

### Reflection on Previous Week's Practice

- Where have you seen God's presence this past week (in your Sabbath practice, maybe, or something else)?



### DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SABBATH

**Scripture for Reflection: *Luke 14:15-24***

- This passage reminds us that in the Kingdom of God, the way we prioritize relationships--whether working, celebrating, or resting--is different than those who live in the world. What does this passage have to teach us about the people we welcome in? How does that relate to the people you tend to gravitate toward?
- Who do you tend to avoid or exclude? When do you know someone is safe or unsafe for you to be vulnerable toward?
- How can including those from whom you think you have nothing to gain be an act of rest?
- We often associate rest with security, familiarity, and return to things that quiet our soul; but God seems to say that rest can (and sometimes must) go outside our familiarity and invite others into a deeper experience of God's rest. How might God reframe your Sabbath to make space for people you might not consider restful?
- What does it look like to do things that are restful but require stepping outside of your perceived sense of safety? What things might refresh the soul while not feeling effortless?



## SABBATH ENGAGEMENT *THIS WEEK*

### Putting into Practice

Identify an area in which you are feeling most fearful or anxious. Do the thing you have been putting off.

### Growing pains

Sabbath invites us to trust and to be reassured we don't have to have everything figured out. In our own rhythms--as on the seventh day of creation--we're invited to let go of fear and anxiety.

### How might we pray for each other?

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### Personal reflection this week

- Who are the people I often don't include or see it as "restful" to spend time with?



## FIND YOUR OUTLET

*We all learn differently and at different paces so find time this week to choose a resource from below and learn more about sabbath and community.*

### ARTICLES

- ["How Interacting with Strangers is Good for You"](#)

### PODCASTS

- [National Community Church Podcasts](#)

### PRAYERS

- "God, you're the One to whom everything is familiar; yet you work to make all things new. Use me this day, this week, this moment, to see familiar things in the light of your work to refresh all things. And in doing so, give me fresh perspectives on the people, places, and moments I often rush by or overlook."

### RECIPES

- [Chunky Apple Cake](#)





# Week 7

## SABBATH & ADVENTURE



### Warm-up Questions

- Name/Vocation or Area of Study
- What's a fear you have that you think is totally irrational?

### Reflection on Previous Week's Practice

- Where have you seen God's presence this past week (in your Sabbath practice, maybe, or something else)?



### DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SABBATH

Scripture for Reflection: **Colossians 2:16-23**

- In this passage, Paul pushes back against becoming too rigid in the ways rituals are practiced. How have you learned/been refreshed by seeing people engage in spiritual practices that are very different from yours?
- Which areas of your faith feel most flexible? Where do you tend to find your practice of faith least flexible? How content are you with that?
- How have you seen your practice of disciplines--Sabbath or otherwise-- re-orienting your heart or shaping the way you live?
- What is something that wouldn't necessarily be thought of as a spiritual practice that has helped you be formed into the character of God? How might that inform the ways you find new ways of practicing Sabbath in the future?



## SABBATH ENGAGEMENT *THIS WEEK*

### Putting into Practice

Read, listen, or engage with something new to you. Visit someone who's sick, practice a new spiritual discipline.

### Growing pains

Adventure, creativity, and freshness can all be a part of life in Christ. So is slowing down and caring for people we often avoid in our pursuit of adventure.

### How might we pray for each other?

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### Personal reflection this week

- How can we practice spontaneity without being overly nostalgic- always looking back, but also without dismissing reflection altogether?



## FIND YOUR OUTLET

*We all learn differently and at different paces so find time this week to choose a resource from below and learn more about sabbath and community.*

### ARTICLES

- ["Spreading the Joy"](#)

### PRAYERS

- "God, you are the one who delights in making all things new--and so it's no surprise that adventure, whimsy, and delight all come from you. As I go through my week, open my eyes to see where everyday moments give opportunity to live into your greater work and play."

### RECIPES

- [Frozen Yogurt-Covered Blueberries](#)



# Week 8

## SABBATH & ACTION



### Warm-up Questions

- Name/Vocation or Area of Study
- What's a fear you have that you think is totally irrational?

### Reflection on Previous Week's Practice

- Where have you seen God's presence this past week (in your Sabbath practice, maybe, or something else)?



### DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SABBATH

**Scripture for Reflection: *Deuteronomy 5:12-15***

- In this passage, God connects Sabbath with his deliverance of the Jews in Egypt. What does Sabbath have to do with deliverance?
- How is our action in helping our neighbor's connected with God's action on their behalf? What does Sabbath have to do with that?
- How we spend our time often informs how we describe ourselves to others. What character traits does Sabbath shape in you?
- How does engaging in Sabbath remind us of how we're invited to engage the world?
- How does Sabbath change how you see others?
- How does seeing God as the primary actor in bringing wholeness give you space to act on behalf of your neighbors?



## SABBATH ENGAGEMENT *THIS WEEK*

### Putting into Practice

Do something that helps you acknowledge your own weakness, and trust that God is most present with you in that weakness. Serve someone this week—without talking about it later.

### Growing pains

Rest emerges from a place of knowing God embraces us at the end of our ability to propel our (or his) mission forward.

### How might we pray for each other?

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### Personal reflection this week

- How might God call you to steward your power not over others, but under them--uplifting their causes without taking credit?
- How does affection relate to passion and justice?



## FIND YOUR OUTLET

*We all learn differently and at different paces so find time this week to choose a resource from below and learn more about sabbath and community.*

### ARTICLES

- ["You Are Weak Enough for God to Use You"](#)

### PODCASTS

- ["Creating Space to Engage Our Neighbors"](#)

### PRAYERS

- [Serenity Prayer](#)

### RECIPES

- [Cranberry Cookies](#)



# Week 9

## SABBATH & HEARING



### Warm-up Questions

- Name/Vocation or Area of Study
- What's the most embarrassing "phase" you went through?

### Reflection on Previous Week's Practice

- Where have you seen God's presence this past week (in your Sabbath practice, maybe, or something else)?



### DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SABBATH

Scripture for Reflection: **Matthew 16:13-20**

- As you read this passage, it's interesting that Jesus cares what other people think about him (at least enough to ask). Why do you think that is? Why does Jesus ask who people are saying He is?
- Who would you say God is recently? What's your "most recent thinking/experience" when it comes to God?
- How does that differ from your previous understanding?
- How has that impacted your own identity?
- Where does God continue to surprise you most?
- How do you find yourself reacting when God isn't who you thought He was? (betrayed, stupid, inflexible, defensive, angry?)
- How do you productively rely on others' testimonies while finding new ways of articulating your own experience?





## SABBATH ENGAGEMENT *THIS WEEK*

### Putting into Practice

Take time to get your thoughts out (in solitude or with someone who won't co-opt them)—journal, meet with a friend, externally process through some questions. In all this, notice your own thoughts, ideas, and feelings, rather than the feelings of others

### Growing pains

Part of rest emerges from hearing God's voice in your life, and speaking to Him with your own voice. We can often get cluttered and clouded by others' voices and opinions.

### How might we pray for each other?

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### Personal reflection this week

- Who has taught you about who God is?
- What are the helpful contributions from these people? Where have those misled you?
- What voices are missing?



## FIND YOUR OUTLET

*We all learn differently and at different paces so find time this week to choose a resource from below and learn more about sabbath and community.*

### ARTICLES

- [How to Start a Prayer Journal](#)

### PODCASTS

- [The Next Right Thing Podcast Episode 72: Design a Rhythm of Life](#)

### RECIPES

- [Blueberry Buckle Cake](#)