

Sabbath | Best Practices + FAQs

Start Somewhere

Our temptation is to start out sprinting, but every part of our faith is a marathon. There may be some of us who already practice Sabbath; however, if this is new for you remember to start where you are. It is okay to start with less than 24 hours or to try different things. The biggest goal is to start somewhere.

Best Practices

Heart of Sabbath

The heart of the Sabbath is to Delight + Rest in God. The question that you should ask each week as you enter Sabbath and finish Sabbath is, “Will this/Did this bring delight + rest in God, and an awareness of the goodness of God for me and the people around me?”

Preparation

“People who keep Sabbath live all seven days differently.”¹ In order to have a 24-hour day set apart, our other 6 days must be lived out intentionally. We must make sure our necessary work is finished, all the housework is finished, and the day is prepared for. Here are some things to consider to help with preparation:

- Plan out a rough schedule for Sabbath and consider what must be done before then.
- Wash the dishes before Sabbath.
- Plan out your Dinner.
- Answer all phone messages and return all text messages.
- Clean or pick up your house or apartment.
- Make a list of work responsibilities that would interrupt your set apart time and make sure to complete those.

Rituals

One way to make this day special and set apart is to establish rituals for you and your family. Something that symbolizes that this day is set apart. Some examples:

- Making pancakes and bacon in the morning each week on this day
- Going for a walk
- Praying a blessing over your kids
- The lighting of candles
- Putting on a special essential oil in your diffuser
- Making a special dinner and/or dessert
- Sleeping in each week on this day
- Meeting with your close friends
- Picking a song you play each week to start Sabbath

¹ “Sabbath as Resistance” by Walter Brueggemann

Personality

It is very important to be aware of and embrace your personality when it comes to Sabbath. For the introverts of the world, rest is not throwing a big party with tons of people each week; and for extroverts, rest is not sitting alone in a park for 24 hours. Sabbath is a time for rest and part of rest is establishing ways for our personalities to receive it.

Season of Life²

Ideas for practice for singles:

- Spend time alone.
- Spend time with friends and family. Get coffee, go out to lunch, take a walk, etc.
- Clear your schedule of work and errands.
- Take a Nap.
- Enjoy this season of life where you have ample time to focus on God's presence.
- Spend time in spiritual reading.
- Listen to a podcast or teaching on the Bible.
- Practice gratitude for the season you're in rather than focusing on where you might be in the future.
- Plan time with your closest friends

Ideas for practice for married couples:

- Spend time together catching up. (Phones away, just the two of you)
- Don't fight (there are six other days to do that).
- Avoid hard conversations.
- Don't talk about things that aren't restful (i.e., stuff you need to get done in the coming week).
- Talk about your personal and shared discipleship.
- Nap.
- Read.
- Give each other space to do what is life giving (opposites often attract and find very different activities restful. Create space for that). Introvert married to an extrovert? Spend the morning reading in the quiet (introvert time), then go out to an early dinner with friends (extrovert). Or something like that.

Ideas for practice for young families:

- Spend time together as a family.
- Have one parent watch the kids for a few hours, while the other goes off to rest or do something life-giving, then swap (i.e., one parent takes a two-hour block in the morning, and another in the afternoon).

² adapted from Sabbath Practice guide released by Bridgetown Church

- Take breaks for individual times of prayer.
- Take your kids to the park, zoo, pool, aquarium, or on a fun, restful outing.
- Make your kids nap or have quiet time, even as they get older.
- Do highlight of the week with your kids.
- Go to bed early.
- Have a special breakfast set out for the kids to eat first thing, so the parents can sleep in and relax.
- Have a special box of toys that your kids just get to play with on the Sabbath.
- Have a Movie Night
- Keep video games off
- Recognize it's hard to rest with little kids, but this is a season. Give yourself grace.

Ideas for practice for older families or empty nesters:

- Spend time together as a family or couple in celebration of life.
- Share a special meal together.
- Do highlight of the week.
- Have a time of prayer and Bible reading as a family.
- Go on a fun, but restful outing to a park, coffee shop, or restaurant.
- Take a nap

Technology

We live in a time that is foreign to history. With our technological devices, we have access to unlimited information and through that, to endless work. Many companies use our devices to take our attention away from the present realities that are before us. Part of our Sabbath should be used to allow us to receive rest from the devices that are always present with us. Here are some ideas:

- A set time of turning our phone off (*ex:1 hour // 5 hours // 24 hours*)
- Turning off our notifications (*especially work-related apps like email, slack, etc.*)
- Turning off our computers + Laptops
- Limiting TV, Videogames, and other entertainment (*This all depends on what the rest of your week looks like. Some people limit TV for the rest of the week and then celebrate with a Movie night on Sabbath*)

FAQs³

How do my Spouse and I find rest with little Kids around?

One way to do this is to work as a team for Sabbath. One of you watches the kids while the other gets a couple of hours to go somewhere for time alone and then switches. Another way is to work with your RC to find others who Sabbath on a different day and can partner with you so you and your Spouse can have time to rest.

Why do we do this if our Eternal Rest is in Jesus?

When Jesus returns, we will experience an eternal rest that is like nothing we have experienced before. Even now, we get to experience much of that through salvation, justification, and God restoring our lives. However, while we wait for Jesus' return, Sabbath serves as a glimpse into eternity. A time when we get to rest in God's goodness and not strive for more. God commands Sabbath in the 10 commandments but does so as a command of care, not a command of control.

What if I do not have a full 24 hours to Sabbath?

Start with whatever is possible. If a 4-hour time of rest once a week is where you can start, then start there. The heart of this is to have time that is intentional and set apart. We would encourage you to work your way slowly but surely to 24 hours, but to start where you are now. We want this to be a lifelong practice.

³ *We will continue to add FAQs as they are brought to our attention.*