

The Ministry of Absence

Female Senior Leaders Forum
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On Flourishing as a Leader, we need:

1. Ministry of Presence

2. Ministry of Absence

A Ministry of Absence

Speaks to TWO vital practices:

1. Sabbath

2. Sabbatical

We don't keep the Sabbath.

The Sabbath keeps us!

Exodus 20

**The people of God only know
about work!**

3 “You shall have no other gods before me.

4 “You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7 “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

8 “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

12 “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

13 “You shall not murder.

14 “You shall not commit adultery.

15 “You shall not steal.

16 “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

Erin Callan, former CFO of Lehman Brothers:

“I didn’t start out with the goal of devoting all of myself to my job. It crept in over time. Each year that went by, slight modifications became the new normal. First I spent a half-hour on Sunday organizing my e-mail, to-do list, and calendar to make Monday morning easier. Then I was working a few hours on Sunday, then all day. My boundaries slipped away until work was all that was left.”

Wayne Muller, *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal,
and Delight in Our Busy Lives*

“A “successful” life has become a violent enterprise. We make war on our own bodies, pushing them beyond their limits; war on our children, because we cannot find enough time to be with them when they are hurt and afraid, and need our company; war on our spirit, because we are too preoccupied to listen to the quiet voices

Wayne Muller, *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal,
and Delight in Our Busy Lives*

that seek to nourish and refresh us; war on our communities, because we are fearfully protecting what we have, and do not feel safe enough to be kind and generous; war on the earth, because we cannot take the time to place our feet on the ground and allow it to feed us, to taste its blessings and give thanks.”

“Secular” Rhythm:

Work → Work → Work → Work → Work →
VACATION!!!! → Work → Work → Work →
Work → Work → VACATION!!!

“Sacred” Rhythm:

Sabbath → Work → Sabbath → Work →
Sabbath → Work

Sabbath

a 24 hour time frame with no
“have-to’s” or “shoulds” which
results in deep rest and renewal.

**You won't go to hell if you
don't keep the Sabbath.**

**But you might live in hell if
you don't keep the Sabbath!**

**Sabbath is actually the clearest
sign of the Gospel that we have!**

**On Sabbath, we do nothing,
and God still loves us!**

Sabbatical

An extended time frame with no “have-to’s” or “shoulds” which results in deep rest and renewal.

General guide:

3 months every 5-7 years

Two Categories of Sabbatical

- 1. Reactive** – a crisis or exhaustion has reached point that demands a significant pause from ministry to assess needs and make decisions.
- 2. Proactive** – Sabbatical is engaged as part of healthy rhythm vs a need demanding a pause.

Implementing a Sabbatical Lifestyle

- 1. Sabbath first**
- 2. Develop internal belief about Sabbatical**
- 3. Introduce leaders to the concept**
- 4. Develop a written policy**
- 5. Schedule it (be flexible)**
- 6. Connect with a coach to guide you**
- 7. Consider the phases of a Sabbatical: phased entry – Sabbatical – phased re-entry**

Sabbath Reflection Questions:

What day is my Sabbath? What day works best?

What will I stop doing on Sabbath?

What will I start doing on Sabbath?

Sabbatical Reflection Questions:

*What do I believe about Sabbatical as
an extended Sabbath?*

*What is my next step toward
a Sabbatical lifestyle?*