

How to Plan a Sabbath.

“The most literal meaning of the Hebrew verb *shabbat* – ‘to stop.’ To sabbath is, at it’s most basic, to stop, to cease, to be done.” — John Mark Comer

In the creation story, God himself came to rest. He stopped on the seventh day, creating a *rhythm* for His creation. God created us to live in sequence with His established *rhythm*.

There is a *rhythm* between day and night.

There is a *rhythm* between waking and sleeping.

There is a *rhythm* between the activity of spring and summer and the dormancy of fall and winter.

There’s a tidal *rhythm* between the land and the sea that’s over all the earth.

Within our own bodies there’s a *rhythm* of the breath as we inhale and exhale.

When we lose this sense of rhythm, of pace, of back and forth, we lose a part of our **humanity**.

“Remember the **Sabbath** day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 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. 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.” *Exodus 20:8-11*

It’s easy to get out of rhythm with God’s design and desire for us. **Sabbath** helps us re-align ourselves with His *rhythms*. **Sabbath** isn’t just about rest, it’s about living in *rhythm* with God’s pace of grace for our lives.

Jesus said, in Mark 2, “The **Sabbath** was made for people, not people for the **Sabbath**.”

Jewish people made many rules around **Sabbath**. Our challenge is that we don’t have any. Consider establishing a few rituals to help you consistently practice **Sabbath**.

Below are some gentle suggestions to help you plan your **Sabbath**:

1. List some people who give life to your *soul*, people who love and appreciate you for who you are and not necessarily for what you do.
2. Write down physical locations that help you become attentive to **God**. They may be beautiful, peaceful places, places that hold special memories for you, or even new places you feel led to explore.
3. List your favorite foods or drinks that you enjoy.
4. Make a **Sabbath** playlist of songs that really help you focus on the goodness of **God**.
5. Think of activities that you enjoy just for the mere pleasure of enjoyment (hobbies, sports, theater, movies, etc.)
6. Name restful and restorative activities (naps, meditation, reading, journaling, mindfulness practices).
7. Write out things of beauty that draw your attention to **God** (candles, fireplace, poetry, art, etc.)
8. List spiritual practices that are meaningful to you or that you would like to try.

After completing these lists, consider the following questions:

1. When will you practice **Sabbath**? What day of the week do you already have some margin? Begin with where you are. Plan for an afternoon **Sabbath** and work up to a full 24-hour period.
2. Plan what spiritual activities or practices you will include in your **Sabbath**.
3. Prepare a special **Sabbath** meal with your family.
4. Surround yourself with items of beauty that will keep your mind going back to **God**.
5. Create space for silence and solitude.
6. Identify a beginning and ending ritual (lighting a candle, quoting a Scripture, saying a prayer, reading a prayer, etc.)
7. Schedule your next **Sabbath**.