



sabbath

unit two



GUIDING SCRIPTURE

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.”

- *Exodus 20:8* -



DEFINITION

“... a twenty-four-hour block of time in which we stop work, enjoy rest, practice delight, and contemplate God.”

- Pete Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* -



GOAL

Cultivate true rest in Jesus and resist the false rest of the world through an established rhythm of Sabbath that incorporates the whole family.

A grid of 20 columns and 30 rows of small dots, resembling a dot grid paper. The dots are arranged in a uniform pattern across the entire page.

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learning resources

One passage is assigned to read ahead of the gathering time. The purpose is to give everyone an overview of the topic at an adult level. It will be the basis for the initial discussions of your group gathering. There are also excellent additional adult-level resources (books, articles, podcasts, and websites) for learning more about the topic for those who have the time and desire to go a bit deeper.

assigned reading

- “Sabbath is the Climax of Living” excerpt from *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly* by Marva J. Dawn

SCAN



optional resources

- *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer
- *Sabbath in the Suburbs* by Mary Ann McKibben Dana
- *How to Guard Sabbath for Your Children* by Jen Wilkin
- *The Sabbath Practice* by Practicing the Way
- *The Sabbath* by Abraham Joshua Heschel

SCAN



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group discussion

opening question & recap

- What is one thing your whole family likes doing together for fun?
- What are three core family values that you think best encompass who your family is what you are about?
- For those who completed the family time analysis, was there anything that stood out to you?

reading material discussion

- In light of the reading, what would you say the purpose of Sabbath is?
- Is your posture toward the Sabbath one of “I need to earn my Sabbath rest” or “I’m living all of the week out of the gift of rest”?
- Does the idea of practicing Sabbath feel hopeful to you? Or more like a chore?
- Were there any other thoughts or ideas from the article that resonated with you?

real-life discussion

- Did your family practice Sabbath, to any extent, when you were growing up? If so, how did those childhood rhythms shape your view of Sabbath today? Are there things you would like to do similarly? To avoid?
- What does practicing Sabbath look like in your family right now?
- What are some things you have tried previously (either with or without kids) to keep the Sabbath?
- Have you seen practicing Sabbath modeled well anywhere?

video

goal

Considering the unique needs of your family, create a realistic plan to practice Sabbath together. Try using the lens of “family Sabbath.” Though each member of your family could come up with what would be their “ideal” personal Sabbath day, in this season, you get to engage in it as a whole family! What things would lead your family into the collective inhale and exhale of rest?

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a few ideas

These are just a few creative ideas to use as a starting point.

These aren't meant to all be used! Try one or maybe two, depending on stages of the kids in your family. Use your group as a resource. What have they tried that has worked well or could be adjusted to work for your family?

create rituals

- Assessing your family's particular circumstances, do your best to set a specific time every week (like starting Saturday night at dinner and going until Sunday night dinner) to celebrate your Sabbath.
- Incorporate your kids:
 - let them set the table with a special tablecloth/place settings
 - get their input on what things would help them feel rested
 - prepare food as a family
- Choose elements to incorporate every week.
 - serve a "fancy drink" like a lemonade smoothie in the summer and Mexican hot cocoa in the winter
 - light two Sabbath candles while asking your kids what each candle represents
 - The "cease" candle reminds us to stop — working, worrying, rushing, wanting... for a whole day. Why? There is nothing that we can do to make God love us more and there is nothing we can do to make God love us less. Sabbath is a gift.
 - The "celebrate" candle reminds us to celebrate Him and all the gifts he has given us.
 - sing a Sabbath song to mark the start of your family Sabbath (see "Ready-to-Use Resources" on the website or scan below)



- Intentionally mark the end of Sabbath.
 - have everyone share the best part of their Sabbath and/or something they are looking forward to in the week ahead
 - end with a prayer of gratitude or Psalm



things to consider incorporating

- Eat good food.
 - make one meal Saturday night and have leftovers for lunch on Sunday
 - keep it simple — canned cinnamon rolls for breakfast on Sunday, paper plates. What is basic yet still life-giving?
- Spend time with extended family.
- Take long walks or hikes.
- Fun! “Save up” special things your family would enjoy doing together on Sabbath: art projects, zoo trips, cookie baking, or any joint activity.



things to consider avoiding

- Individual screen time.
- Shopping (in an effort to choose to celebrate what you already have instead of thinking about things you want).

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making a plan

A list of questions to be answered individually or as a couple, after spending time talking about the topic communally.



key guiding question

How can you lead your family into intimacy with God by practicing Sabbath — a day of stopping (work, worry, hurry...) in exchange for resting in God's presence, and celebrating his goodness?



thinking it through

- Is keeping the Sabbath a priority for your family? If so, is that priority reflected in how your family is actually operating?
- What would your personal “ideal” Sabbath look like? Your spouse’s? Are those reasonable expectations to have for a family Sabbath? Think through the lens of practicing a “family Sabbath.” Though it may not be either of your “ideal” scenarios, what is the “next best” set-up that would lead your whole family into a collective, soul-level inhale and exhale?
- What kinds of activities lead your family into rest?
- What kinds of activities pull your family away from rest?
- Ask your kids questions like:
 - What is something that makes you feel rested or calm?
 - What are things that make you feel rushed or frustrated?
 - When is a time that you have felt close to Jesus?
- What are regular rhythms you would like to incorporate into your family Sabbath?

- What time period will be best for your family to most consistently practice Sabbath?
- What is a ritual you can use to clearly mark the beginning and ending of your Sabbath (lighting candles, plates only used for that meal, a special drink...)?
- How can you “set the ambience” of Sabbath rest (a special tablecloth, putting away technology...)?
- If your family structure allows for it, do you want to include trading “down time” with your spouse? How can you make that work in a way that won’t cause the “on spouse” to feel stressed?
- Do you want to incorporate “one-on-one” times with kids?
- Sometimes, and in some seasons, it takes more work to prepare for a day of less work. What are some ways to simplify to make the “more work” not an impossible amount of work (paper plates, simple meal plan or pre-make your meals, finish household chores the day before...)? See “Ready-to-Use Resources” on the website or scan below for a Sabbath Planning Checklist.



- Are there other people that you could join or invite into the Sabbath rhythm with your family?
- Should you set limits on technology? If yes, what will be the parameters?