

Rediscovering Sabbath, Week 7

Small Group Discussion Guide, week of Oct 23rd

OCTOBER 23RD SERMON SUMMARY

REDISCOVERING SABBATH: RESPOND

The rhythm of Sabbath is 6 days of work and 1 day of rest – so after 6 Sabbath messages, we stopped for a Sabbath experience. The worship service included 4 brief exhortations that reviewed the sermon series, followed by worship and reflection.

1. Reclaim the truth that we are forgiven and set free (Heb. 4:14-16, Rom. 8:1-2)
2. Receive: Sabbath is a day to come back up from a busy week, a difficult life (Matt. 11:28-30)
3. Relinquish: What weight (rock) do you need to let go of? Denounce it; let it go (Heb 12:1-2.)
4. Redirect: Sabbath leads us to community as we turn from the idolatry that disintegrates it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Share one of the following:

- One way your idea of Sabbath has changed in the last few weeks
- One idea that stood out to you or impacted you in Sunday's worship service

READ PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11

3 I thank my God every time I remember you. **4** In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, **6** being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.

8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, **10** so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, **11** filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

2. Imagine that this letter is written directly to us – i.e., that we are part of the church in Philippi, or that the Apostle Paul is writing to us at CBC.

a. What makes Paul thankful for us? Explain what you think he means in:

- vs. 3-5
- vs. 6
- vs. 7-8

b. What does Paul want for us? Explain what you think he means in:

- vs. 9
- vs. 10
- vs. 11

3. *He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus ... Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose (Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13.)*

a. How do you think God does this work of completion in us?

b. Who do you think is responsible for this work – God, or us, or both? Explain.

c. How would Sabbath rest help us grow, especially in the ways described in vs. 9-11?

d. What is God's part, and what is our part, in bringing about a time of Sabbath rest?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

4. Share whatever you feel comfortable sharing about your Sabbath experience during the Sunday worship service. How do you feel God was/is speaking to you?

5. How might God be inviting you to respond to His invitation to Sabbath Rest? Be as specific as you can about attitudes, activity, next steps, etc. in answering one or two of these questions:

- How is God inviting to you to Sabbath rest?
- What new ideas about Sabbath do you want to explore?
- What gets in the way of changing or starting?
- What one step do you want to begin now?
- How do you need help, support, or prayer from your small group?

6. In this *Rediscovering Sabbath* series, have you learned something new, or understood something in a new way, about God? How has this impacted your relationship with Him?

SABBATH PRACTICES AND EXERCISES

Each week you will be given some practical ideas and exercises to incorporate a time of Sabbath - use them (or not), or tweak, change, or adapt them in whatever way fits you.

Silence

Pastor Eugene Peterson took his Sabbath on a Monday. He and his wife regularly packed lunches and binoculars, and drove a short way to a trailhead. Before they began their hike, they would read a psalm, pray, and then hike in complete silence for 2 or 3 hours, until they stopped for lunch. "We walk leisurely," he writes, "emptying ourselves, opening ourselves to what is there: fern shapes, flower fragrances, bird-song, granite outcropping, oaks and sycamores. When it was time for lunch, they broke the silence with a prayer of blessing for the food, the river, the forest. Then, free to talk, they shared their bird sightings, observations, feelings, and thoughts.

This kind of silence alters perception. We see differently in silence, when we are not expected to comment, analyze, or respond. Mother Teresa said, "God is the friend of silence." Things are born in quiet that cannot be heard in the din of our overly verbal days.

Sabbath time is enriched by some period of intentional silence. Choose a period of time or an activity – such as a walk or hike, alone or with a friend – when you will refrain from speech. Notice what arises in silence, the impulse to speak, the need to judge or respond out loud, any discomfort. When I first went to a monastery, the silence was unbearable. Now, after years of practice, it seems sweet, safe, a Sabbath, a genuine sanctuary in time.

(Excerpt from *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives* by Wayne Muller, p. 55.)