

# Sabbath



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"I have come to think that the fourth commandment on sabbath is the most difficult and most urgent of the commandments in our society, because it summons us to intent and conduct that defies the most elemental requirements of a commodity-propelled society that specializes in control and entertainment, bread and circuses ... along with anxiety and violence." - Walter Brueggemann

"Sabbath is not dependent upon our readiness to stop. We do not stop when we are finished. We do not stop when we complete our phone calls, finish our project, get through this stack of messages, or get out this report that is due tomorrow. We stop because it is time to stop."- Wayne Muller

"Jesus took specific aim at misunderstanding(s) of the Sabbath. As the Lord of the Sabbath, he freely interpreted the sabbath command, claiming that God gave it to people as a restorative and recuperative gift. God did not intend for life to be all effort, so he punctuated each week with 24 hours of sabbath rest, during which people could remember what life is about and who it is for." -Adele Calhoun

"Sabbath rhythms are not meant for paper; they are meant to be practiced. "Holy days, rituals, liturgies—all are like musical notations which, in themselves," one Jewish scholar writes, "cannot convey the nuances and textures of live performance." We are not to know about the Sabbath. We are to know the Sabbath"- AJ Swabota

Ultimately, however, reading about Sabbath is like looking at a picture of food. It will not fill you. It can only whet your appetite. You must finish the book, put it down, and actually do the Sabbath. You must get your life quiet enough one day out of the week to hear God's heart. Only then will you experience the counter-cultural joy of Shabbat shalom, Sabbath peace.- Matthew J Sleeth

Sabbath is God's way of saying, "Stop. Notice your limits. Don't burn out." It is a day He gives us to remember who and what work is for as well as what matters most. Sunday, generously hands us hours to look into the eyes of those we love. We have time for loving and being loved. Rhythmically, the Sabbath reminds us that we belong to the worldwide family of God. We are citizens of another kingdom- a kingdom not ruled by the clock and the tyranny of the urgent."- Adele Calhoun

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."-Matthew 11:29-30 MSG

"For thus said the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength. But you were unwilling" Isaiah 30:15

#### Resources:

Sacred Rhythms by Ruth Haley Barton  
The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry by John Mark Comer  
The Sabbath by Abraham Joshua Heschel  
Sabbath as Resistance by Walter Brueggemann  
Margin by Richard Swenson



# How to Sabbath With Kids

Parents and families can face some big challenges practicing Sabbath. Expectations, personalities, differing energies levels, and so many other things can create friction in how we engage with this Practice. Having said that, Sabbath can be a rich, life-giving experience that families enjoy together. In order for families to practice this practice we need to make four adjustments and four commitments...

## Adjustments:

1. **Don't equate Sabbath with Relaxation.** Too often Sabbath becomes a "personal day" or a day to catch up on all the rest we did not get during the week. But, people still need to eat, laundry folded, the lawn mowed. Sabbath is not about "doing nothing" as much as it is about being intentional in what we do. We should do our best to set up the day in such a way that we can be free to say yes to the things we really want to do! (Which might mean doing the laundry the day before). Most importantly, our job-work should be turned off so that we can be present with our people!
2. **Don't equate Sabbath with "Me Time."** It certainly could be! But to really sabbath as a family, that personal time may need to be found elsewhere or as part of the day (maybe there is a quiet time where everyone in the house does their own thing, or shifts are taken so that parents can go for a walk, etc).
3. **Don't equate Sabbath with "disengagement."** This is not a day to check out (ok, sure, check out of Instagram, or email, or your news feed but not from your people!) The gift of this day is presence to and with each other!
4. **Resist seeing your kids as interruptions.** Take care of your email the day before, block off an hour to read, do whatever you need to do to ensure that some chunk of the day you can say "yes" to your kids and spouse and the collective activity you will engage in together.

## Commitments:

1. **Ceasing:** The laptops are closed, the tablets are off, there is no rush to soccer practice! The things that normally keep us moving are set aside so that we can go slower, and go together!
2. **Resting:** Again, sabbathing with kids may not be "relaxing", but it should be restful. No rushing to school, no microwaving oatmeal...this is a day to sleep in (as much as possible), to sit around the table a little longer, and to choose life-giving activities that bring us together.
3. **Embracing:** Let your kids lead some part of the day...and go with it! Even if it means doing the same simple thing over and over again. Even if it means making a big mess. Embrace it!
4. **Feasting:** This does not mean you need to spend 6 hours of the day in the kitchen preparing meals (in fact, for some of us, not having to meal prep/plan might be the best sabbath gift you could embrace!). But there should be some fun, some enjoyment: an extra scoop of ice cream, more time for a meal, a special treat. Whatever speaks feasting to you and your family.

In all of this have grace for yourself. Try different things, keep experimenting. The practice will evolve as your family grows, grows up, and enter different stages. But the commitments stay the same! So may you cease, rest, embrace, and feast!