

# BE WITH JESUS

## SABBATH

**Setting aside dedicated time to rest and reflect on my life in Christ.  
Slowing to be “present” with God and others.**

- Welcome, Review
- Group Check-In
- Message
- Group Study
- Practice the Practice
- Closing Prayer

This Week’s Key Verse to Think About, Soak in, and Memorize:

*“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” **Matthew 11:28-30***

More Resources to Explore!

See the Spiritual Growth Section of the Twin Cities Church website:

[www.twincities.church/spiritual-growth-be3](http://www.twincities.church/spiritual-growth-be3)

Click on the “Sabbath” picture to find many helpful resources.

# SABBATH

Have you ever felt like you're running on empty? Maybe life feels that way right now. Modern life is filled with noise, information, and endless distraction. Phones buzz, ding, and demand attention. We are constantly connected, constantly responding, constantly moving. The demands from work, home, family time - even vacations – can feel exhausting. We push and push until one day we realize there's nothing left to give. Yet stopping doesn't feel like an option.

All of this begins to take a toll on us - our body feels heavy, the mind becomes foggy, and emotionally we begin to feel overwhelmed and anxious. Experiences like this reveal an important truth: life requires a healthier rhythm. Without guarding that rhythm carefully, it's easy to crash.

Much of modern life is built around chasing things - dreams, recognition, comfort, success. Ironically, the constant pursuit of these things often leaves us more exhausted than fulfilled. What many eventually discover is that the soul desperately needs something different: rest. From the very beginning, God established a rhythm for life that includes time to stop, rest, reflect, and be restored.

## What the Bible Says About Sabbath

The rhythm of rest begins at the very beginning, at creation.

**Genesis 2:1–3** *Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy...*

God rested - not because of exhaustion, but to establish a pattern for human life. Scripture even says this rest refreshed Him.

**Exodus 31:16-17** *The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.*

Because human beings are created in God's image, life was designed with a rhythm of work and rest. Sabbath is a regular time to step away from normal activity and reconnect with God. It reminds us that life is not sustained by endless effort, but by God's grace and provision.

## A Biblical Example – Jesus and Sabbath

Jesus Himself followed a rhythm of Sabbath rest.

**Luke 4:14–16** *Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit... He went to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day He went into the synagogue, as was His custom.*

When religious leaders added additional rules that turned the Sabbath into a burden rather than a blessing, Jesus challenged that misunderstanding.

**Mark 2:27** *(Jesus) "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."*

The Sabbath was never intended to become a legalistic restriction. Instead, it was given as a gift from God, designed to restore and bless His people.

### **Why Sabbath Matters**

Without intentional rest, life gradually becomes unbalanced. Constant activity drains the body, strains emotions, and dulls the heart's awareness of God. When life becomes defined by endless striving, the soul begins to feel restless and empty. We start to believe: *everything depends on me*.

Sabbath is an act of resistance against a culture that measures worth by productivity. It reminds us that God is at work even when we are not.

In a world that constantly tells us to do more and be more, Sabbath creates space to simply *be* - to breathe deeply, to slow down, and to notice God again. It recalibrates the heart. What once felt urgent begins to lose its grip, and what truly matters comes back into focus.

When the soul finds rest in God, something begins to shift. Gratitude replaces anxiety. Joy replaces exhaustion. Trust replaces striving. Sabbath becomes a weekly reminder that God is the source of life, strength, and renewal - and that we can trust Him with what we lay down.

### **What It Looks Like to Practice Sabbath**

Practicing Sabbath creates space for a different kind of life rhythm. Instead of constantly rushing from one responsibility to the next, there is intentional space to slow down and become present with God. The pace of life shifts from striving to receiving.

Sabbath invites us to step away from the constant pressure to produce and perform. It becomes a time to remember that our identity and worth are not defined by productivity, but by being loved children of God.

It also creates space to notice the goodness of God. Simple moments - like sharing a meal with friends, enjoying creation, spending time with loved ones, or reflecting in prayer - become opportunities to delight in the gifts God has given us.

Over time, the practice of Sabbath renews and restores the soul. Life begins to regain a healthier and more peaceful rhythm. Instead of beginning each week depleted and overwhelmed, we begin the week renewed, centered, and ready to live with greater joy and purpose.

This week, we will practice **Sabbath**. This practice doesn't have to begin as a full day. It might start with a few intentional hours set apart to rest, unplug, and be with God, and over time that rhythm can grow. As you create space to slow down and rest in His presence, don't worry about doing it perfectly. Simply turn down the noise, step out of the rush, and be with Jesus.

# GROUP STUDY: Sabbath

## Begin with Prayer and Silence

*Gather as a group and say a quick prayer to invite the Holy Spirit to guide your time together. Then spend a moment in silence, expressing a desire to hear from God.*

## Explore the Scriptures

1. Let's read Deuteronomy 5:12-15. God set aside a Sabbath day of rest - even modeling it Himself after creation. Why do you think it matters for us to rest in God's sufficiency instead of our own effort?
2. Sabbath has long been a rhythm of rest and restoration—even in Jesus' time. How does practicing Sabbath help grow our trust in God? In what ways could it bring more balance or help us keep God first in our week?
3. Let's read Mark 2:23–28. Where did the Pharisees misunderstand the Sabbath? What does Jesus show us about its true purpose? How can we guard against turning Sabbath into something rigid or legalistic?

## Read Through the Practice Together

Read through the practice on the next page together, and then answer these questions:

- Do you feel you understand the practice? Do you have any questions about it?
- How do you feel about practicing this, any concerns?

## Share Your Personal Action Plan with the Group

*Jesus replied, "...blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice." - Luke 11:28*

I will practice Sabbath on (day and time) \_\_\_\_\_

in this place (location) \_\_\_\_\_

## Close in Prayer

## **PRACTICE: Sabbath**

Our practice this week is Sabbath. This is a weekly time to step away from the normal pace of life to rest in God's presence, enjoy His goodness, and allow our soul to be restored. It's about creating space to experience the life-giving rhythm God designed for us. A helpful way to remember this rhythm is: Stop → Rest → Delight → Restore

### **1. Set Aside Time**

If you are able, find a 24-hour period to practice Sabbath. Some people begin in the evening and end the next evening, often starting with a shared meal. Others practice Sabbath for a full day, such as Sunday from morning to evening. Experiment and see what rhythm works best for you.

### **2. Stop – Begin Your Sabbath**

Sabbath begins when we stop our normal work and responsibilities. Starting with a small ritual can help mark this moment and set the time apart as sacred. Some ideas include:

- Lighting a candle
- Sharing a meal with family or friends or taking communion together
- Reading a Psalm or offering a short prayer or a blessing over your household
- Singing a worship song or giving thanks to God

You might begin with a simple prayer:

*“Lord, we stop our work today to rest in You. Fill this time with Your peace and restore our souls.”*

### **3. Rest and Delight**

Once you stop working, begin to fill the day with rest and delight. Rest allows your body, mind, and heart to slow down. Delight helps you enjoy the goodness of God and the gifts He has given. Choose activities that refresh and bring joy to your soul. Some examples might include:

- Taking a walk in nature or spending time outdoors
- Enjoying a slow meal with family or friends, enjoying meaningful conversation
- Reading, listening to music, or spending quiet time with God
- Napping, simply slowing your pace, or putting your phone away for that day

### **4. Restore and Reflect**

During the day pay attention to what brings restoration to your heart and soul. Sabbath is a time to reconnect with God, experience peace, and allow your spirit to be renewed. As your Sabbath comes to a close, take a few moments to reflect on the day. Then, you might:

- Read a Psalm
- Enjoy a meal with loved ones
- Talk about what brought joy during the day, and express your gratitude to God

Ending with gratitude helps carry the peace of Sabbath into the week ahead.

