SABBATH KEEPING

Exodus 20:8-11 "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…"

Deuteronomy 15:5 "Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day."

"Sabbath time can be a revolutionary challenge to the violence of overwork, mindless accumulation, and the endless multiplication of desires, responsibilities, and accomplishments. Sabbath is a way of being in time where we remember who we are, remember what we know, and taste the gifts of spirit and eternity."

- Wayne Muller, Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, & Delight in our Busy Lives

Sabbath ceasing [means] to cease not only from work itself, but also from the need to accomplish and be productive, from the worry and tension that accompany our modern criterion of efficiency, from our efforts to be in control of our lives as if we were God, from our possessiveness and our enculturation, and finally, from the humdrum and meaninglessness that result when life is pursued without the Lord at the center of it all.

- Marva J. Dawn, Keeping the Sabbath Wholly

"The great Swiss theologian Karl Barth wrote, 'A being is free only when it can determine and limit its activity.' By that definition, I have a hard time counting many free beings among my acquaintance. I know people who can do five things at once who are incapable of doing nothing. I know people who can decide what to do without being able to do less of it. Since I have been one of these people, I know that saying no is a more difficult spiritual practice than tithing, praying on a cold stone floor, or visiting a prisoner on death row."

- Barbara Brown Taylor, An Altar in the World

Practical Steps

1. Decide what you need to stop doing each "Sabbath" so that you can enjoy a day of freedom from the strivings of the material world;

2. Choose a few favorite activities that will give you a sense of Sabbath joy, for example, lighting candles, napping, making love with your spouse, walking, preparing and enjoying a special meal with family or friends, singing, dancing, praying blessings for family members, doing spiritual study, giving to charity, and having special conversations with gratitude;

3. Use the blessings and prayers of the Sabbath as a means of opening up your own heart; and

4. Try to take as much of the Sabbath feeling as possible with you into the rest of the week.

(From Felder, *The Ten Challenges*, pages 99-104)

"God gives us fifty-two Sabbaths, or seven and a half weeks of vacation time per year! — time during which we are to do no work. As Thomas Aquinas put it, each week one goes on *ad vacadum divinas* — a vacation with God." (Karen Mains, *Making Sunday Special*)

Keeping the Sabbath Wholly

Mark 2:27-28 "The Sabbath was made for humankind, not humankind for the Sabbath."
Marva Dawn, in *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting*, unpacks each of these as ways to practice Sabbath:

Ceasing

- Ceasing work
- Ceasing productivity and accomplishment
- Ceasing anxiety, worry and tension
- Ceasing our trying to be God
- Ceasing our possessiveness
- Ceasing our enculturation
- Ceasing the humdrum and meaninglessness

Resting

- Spiritual rest
- Physical rest
- Emotional rest
- Intellectual rest
- Social rest
- Aids to rest
- An ethics of character

Embracing

- Embracing intentionality
- Embracing the values of Christian community
- Embracing time rather than space
- Embracing giving instead of requiring
- Embracing our calling in life
- Embracing wholeness or *shalom*
- Embracing the world

Feasting

- Feasting on the eternal
- Feasting with music
- Feasting with beauty
- Feasting with food
- Feasting with affection
- Feasting and festival

Sabbath Manifesto's: Ten Principles for Practicing Sabbath

01. Avoid technology.

02. Connect with loved ones.

03. Nurture your health.

04. Get outside.

05. Avoid commerce.

06. Light candles.

07. Drink wine.

08. Eat bread.

09. Find silence.

10. Give back.

From www.sabbathmanifesto.com

Good Books on Sabbath:

- Wayne Muller, *Sabbath: Restoring the Sacred Rhythm of Rest.*
- Walter Brueggemann, *Sabbath as Resistance.*
- Marva Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting*
- Siang-Yang Tan, *Rest: Experiencing God's Peace in a Restless world*

Retreat Centers: www.findthedivine.com