

## Abide Practices – Sabbath

This week there is an invitation to explore abiding through the practice of sabbath. More so than any of the other spiritual practices, sabbath requires planning and preparation if it going to be fruitful and not frustrating! Below are a few steps to help you begin to plan for a sabbath. Have a go, experiment, see what helps you rest and delight in God!

### STEP 1 – Mark out a 24-hour time period (or as close as you can) to stop, rest, delight and worship

There are three common variations of this practice: (If possible, establish a regular rhythm of sabbath on the same day each week as this will help it become a consistent practice).

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| 1 | <b>The traditional Sabbath:</b> from sunset Friday night to the same time Saturday late afternoon / evening. (This works well for people who are especially busy on Sundays with church activities or other events.)                   |
| 2 | <b>The Lord’s Day Sabbath:</b> from the Sunday morning gathering, through bedtime on Sunday. (This works best for a lot of people, as Sunday is the calmest day of the week, and we already set aside time to worship as a community.) |
| 3 | <b>The midweek Sabbath:</b> any day during the week. (This works best for people with odd or sporadic work schedules and have a midweek day off.)  |

**ACTION:** Which one of these options are you going to choose?

### STEP 2 – Pick a ritual to clearly begin and end your Sabbath

Much of the Sabbath is about rhythms and rituals that set aside the day as “holy.” Beginning and ending with a marked moment reminds you that this day is different and will help you settle into rest, and help you re-enter the week with a restful spirit.

Here are a few ideas of how to **begin** the sabbath from both ancient tradition and modern practice (but remember, these are all just suggestions – find what works for you).

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| 1 | <b>Light two candles</b> (symbolic for the two commands in Exodus and Deuteronomy to “remember” and “observe” the Sabbath). Invite the Spirit of Jesus to come and give your home light, joy, love, peace, and rest.<br><br>The two candles can also represent ‘ceasing’ and ‘celebrating.’ As you light them, spend some time sharing celebrations from the week or things you are looking forward to enjoying on the sabbath. |
| 2 | <b>Pour a glass of wine</b> (or grape juice for the kids or those who don’t drink alcohol). Pray a blessing over the drink and give thanks.   |
| 3 | <b>Speak a blessing:</b> If you have a family, this is where, traditionally, the father speaks a blessing over the children and the mother. If you’re with roommates or friends, this can be a wonderful time to bless each other, with prayers like: May you be happy and full of joy. May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. May you find rest for your soul etc.                                  |
| 4 | <b>Read a Psalm, sing a song, quote a poem, or pray a liturgy to centre on God.</b>   |
| 5 | <b>Pray:</b> ask the Holy Spirit to bring a spirit of rest over your life and lead and guide you through the next 24 hours.   |
| 6 | <b>Share a meal:</b> If you begin your sabbath in the evening, start with a favourite meal with your family or friends.   |
| 7 | <b>Go to church:</b> If you begin your sabbath in the morning on a Sunday, go to church and worship with the community of believers.  |

**ACTION:** What way will you choose to begin your sabbath?

Here are a few ideas to end your Sabbath:

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| 1 | <b>Take a slow, leisurely prayer walk</b> around your neighbourhood, nearby park, or nature reserve. |
| 2 | <b>Read a psalm.</b>   |

3	<b>Share a meal</b> with family and friends.
4	<b>Spend some time alone</b> or with your family and friends in prayers of gratitude.
5	<p><b>Light a candle:</b> Traditionally, the Sabbath ends by sitting on the floor, lighting a special Havdalah candle and sharing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The best part of your Sabbath</li> <li>2. What you are looking forward to in the week ahead</li> </ol> <p>Then ending with a prayer of gratitude.</p>
<b>ACTION:</b> What way will you choose to end your sabbath?	

**STEP 3 – Decide what you will do and what you won't do**

The heart of the sabbath is to delight in the Lord by fill your day with activities that help you to worship and are life-giving for your soul. Make a list of things that you love to do and then evaluate them by asking two questions: do they bring me rest and do they stir me to delight and worship? Try to distinguish between recreation and restoration. Try to transition from entertainment, TV, social media, shopping, and going out, to activities that deeply connect you to Jesus and his rest.

Below are some suggested activities you could do on your sabbath, that many people find restful and restorative and also some recommendations of things you should try and avoid doing.

But remember there are no 'oughts' or 'shoulds'. Adapt your day to your personality, preference, stage of life and how you connect with God.

1	<p><b>Things to do:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lighting candles</li> <li>• Enjoying good food</li> <li>• Drink wine</li> <li>• Singing</li> <li>• Listening to music</li> <li>• Worshipping with your church community</li> <li>• Walking</li> <li>• Playing</li> <li>• Napping</li> <li>• Making love (if you're married)</li> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Spending time alone with God</li> <li>• Spending time with family and friends</li> <li>• Being grateful</li> <li>• Acts of generosity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Things to avoid:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shopping</li> <li>• Running errands</li> <li>• Household chores</li> <li>• Paying bills</li> <li>• Checking emails</li> <li>• Working</li> <li>• Using social media</li> <li>• Being on your phone</li> </ul>
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**ACTION:** What will you choose to do on your sabbath and what will you choose not to do?