

# Practising Spiritual Disciplines



## SABBATH

*Resting • Health • Trust • Community*

### Some methods to help you experience Sabbath:

#### 1. RECOGNIZE THE GIFT OF SABBATH

Often we find ourselves taking on too much for too long which can lead to the overwhelming feeling known as “burnout.” Regularly practising a Sabbath provides us with a time of rest physically, mentally and spiritually. Sabbath is a beneficial gift from God, not a burden. Mark 2:27 says: “Then he said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath’ ” (NIV). Jesus also modelled Sabbath practices: corporate worship, shared fellowship, refreshing prayer times and resting.

#### 2. ESTABLISH BOUNDARIES

To ensure Sabbath is a regular part of our lives, we must make it a priority. Determine all the things in your life that need to change to enable room. Establish a time and frequency, physically adding it to your calendar. Communicate it well to those around you. This not only keeps you accountable, but gives courtesy to others for your absence. Guard the benefit of Sabbath as part of guarding your heart. Proverbs 4:23 reminds us: “Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life” (NLT).

#### 3. DISCONNECT TO CONNECT

The practice of Sabbath is not a carbon copy for all. However, one commonality is keeping one day a week holy, by laying aside the normal activities of daily life, in order to discover the presence of God and corporately participate in creation’s worship of the Lord. Entering God’s rest involves loving humanity, as demonstrated by the works Jesus performed on the Sabbath. It may also include time outdoors. Nature has an incredible way of reconnecting us with our Maker. Sabbath practices disconnect us from work and connect us to what brings refreshment and renewal; connection with God, people, nature and relaxing activities. Jeremiah 31:25 says: “For I will satisfy the weary soul, and every languishing soul I will replenish” (ESV).

#### 4. RELEASE TO REGAIN

Incorporate prayer—our greatest source of release—into your Sabbath as a way to personally reconnect yourself to the Almighty. These prayers should be outside the regular prayers we often have relative to duty/responsibility. Offer up to God in trust all that wars against rest for us. Strive for a rejuvenating rest. This may mean being still, even taking a nap. However, rest can also include movement, such as a casual walk or stretching to relieve physical tension. Rest may mean a drive outside town to fully experience the mini-escape from life’s demands that Sabbath can provide. Psalm 62:1 reminds us: “Truly my soul finds rest in God” (NIV). Establish your release with the goal of regaining the strength and focus needed to productively step back into community, with the Lord by your side.

### My Action Plan

- Recognize the benefit of God’s gift of Sabbath. Research more in the Scriptures and engage others in conversation to help enhance this practice for one another.
- Make Sabbath a priority in my life, carving out consistent space to the best of my ability and circumstances.
- Nurture the Sabbath experience for myself, coupling holistic rest with a renewed awareness of Christ’s presence.

### SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

Cut out and keep in your Bible or journal. Allow these verses to mould your idea of Scripture reading.

“And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made” (Genesis 2:2 KJV).

“Then he said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath’ ” (Mark 2:27 NIV).

“And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone” (Matthew 14:23 ESV).

“But Jesus himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray” (Luke 5:16 NASB).

“Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and so that the slave born in your household and the foreigner living among you may be refreshed” (Exodus 23:12 NIV).

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed” (Mark 1:35 NIV).

“Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, ‘Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest’ ” (Mark 6:31 NIV).

“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 NIV).