

## **SABBATH: PASTORAL REFLECTIONS**

**Deuteronomy 5: 1-5; 12-15** Moses convened all Israel, and said to them: Hear, O Israel, the statutes and ordinances that I am addressing to you today; you shall learn them and observe them diligently. The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. Not with our ancestors did the LORD make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today. The LORD spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the fire. (At that time I was standing between the LORD and you to declare to you the words of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain.) And he said...

Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns, so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.

*“The Deuteronomy reason for Sabbath-keeping is that our ancestors in Egypt went for four hundred years without a vacation (Deut. 5:15). Never a day off. The consequence: they were no longer considered persons but slaves. Hands. Work units. Not persons created in the image of God but equipments for making brick and building pyramids. Humanity was defaced.”*

Eugene Peterson, Working the Angles. P. 49

### **1. PRAYER**

Revelation 5:6-14

WHAT PRAYER DO YOU BRING INTO THIS ROOM RELATING TO YOUR SABBATH PRACTICE OR DESIRE FOR ONE?

### **2. MY STORY**

### **3. YOUR STORIES**

### **4. GOD'S STORY**

*“Making Sabbath a Delight,”* Glenn Holland

<http://plusline.org/article.php?id=2283>

Sabbath is supposed to be sort of a reenactment of the Garden of Eden and also a foretaste — and the rabbis talk about this — is a foretaste of the world to come. Many people have a hard time discovering how to make the Sabbath a delight. As a guide, consider that the Sabbath was intended to be a time for spiritual and physical refreshment; a time to get to know God better and be physically renewed to face another week (Exodus 20:8-11).

There are a total of ten recorded incidences in which Jesus did something on Sabbath.

A. Eating

Picking grain with the disciples (Matthew 12:1-8)

Eating with one of the chief Pharisees (Luke 14:1)

B. Healing

Man with crippled hand Mark (3:1-6)

Crippled man by the pool (John 5:1-11)

Blind man at Siloam receives sight (John 9:13-17)

A woman relieved of an 18-year infirmity (Luke 13:10-17)

C. Teaching in the synagogue

Matthew 12:9-13

Mark 1:21-28

Mark 6:2:1-6

D. Resting

In the tomb (Matthew 27:57-60)

Note: In no place do we find Jesus saying, "It's been a tough week. Let's sleep the day away!" There is no indication from the actions of Christ that the day was designed for inactivity. The only time we find Him resting on Sabbath was when He was DEAD.

## 5. MAPPING OUR STORIES

"*The Liberating Gift of Sabbath*," by Kevin Armstrong

<http://www.divinity.duke.edu/programs/spe/articles/200708/gift.html>

### Building a Sabbath House

There are many ways to begin or deepen our sabbath practices but let me suggest just one.

Perhaps the best place to begin is at home. Literally, at home. The shape of our homes has an ethical as well as architectural quality. How we dwell says something about who we are.

To be fair, Jesus seemed to be ambivalent about home life. Foxes and birds had their home but not would-be followers of Jesus. When his family came looking for him, presumably to take him home, Jesus said he was already at home. This unsentimental understanding of home was not meant to destroy our life together but to reconstitute it. Keeping sabbath forces us to ask what conditions are necessary for us to keep the sabbath in our home and among the people we call family.

Take a moment to draw a sketch of your home's floor plan. Make an outline of each room, including any outside space where you may spend time. Now put a number in each room representing the hours (or minutes) you normally spend in each room on a given day. If you live with others in your house, ask them to try the exercise and compare notes for agreement and divergence. Then ask a few questions:

- What would an outside observer learn from your drawing?
- How much time do you spend alone, and how much time do you spend face-to-face with others?
- How much time do you spend in each room "plugged-in" to work or appliances?
- What would you like to deepen or change about the way your work and rest in your home?

## 6. REDIRECTING OUR STORIES

Exodus 20:8-10

Mark 2:27

Matthew 11:28-

**QUERY:** How can pastoral leaders Sabbath?

**RESOURCES:**

<http://www.ministerscouncil.com/OnLineManual/SelfCareandRenewal.aspx>

Collegial Groups (TIM – also Kyle Childress story)

Spiritual Disciplines

Sabbatical Information

Respite Site List

Healthy Habits in Ministry

Practicing Pastoral Excellence: Transforming Time - *by Bruce Epperly*

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**7. PRAYING OUR STORIES**

Psalm 23, KJV

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his names sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.