

Devotional
“Healing on the Sabbath” - Luke 6:1-16

Monday: “On the Sabbath” - Luke 6: 1 and Genesis 2:2-3

Sometimes it is hard imagining that God needed to rest. That God created the entire world and then needed a break. The notion of God resting seems to go against our notion of God being all powerful, but we need to remember that God was modeling for *us*, humanity, the need to stop. All too often we try to live our lives like we are all powerful, like we can be on the go all the time and that it won't effect us, but in truth this is not how we were made. We were made to rest. We need not only a day off, but a day to cease trying to live up to mounting expectations placed on us by ourselves and others.

The Jewish tradition states that until Sabbath, creation was not complete - that God needed to rest as part of the creating process. Is this true in your life? Is rest part of your creation process? Why or why not?

Prayer: God, we confess that we try to keep ourselves busy so that we do not need to rest - stop and think. We confess that somewhere deep inside of us, we think if we can just keep going we are more powerful or more important. Forgive us, O Lord, and free us to find rest in you. Amen.

Tuesday: “Lord of the Sabbath” - Luke 6: 2-5 and Exodus 16:17-30

Sabbath is not just a time of rest, but it is a time of *holy* rest. A time set apart to be with God. When God first instituted Sabbath the Israelites needed to be told to cease all that they were doing in order to fully appreciate God's goodness and beauty. In today's scripture lesson, God provided manna or food from heaven, daily for the people and they had enough to meet their needs. However, they were not allowed to hoard - they had to gather only what they could use in one day or it would spoil, except in preparation for the Sabbath. Then they were allowed to gather what they needed for that day and the Sabbath.

Sabbath always requires preparation. Did you ever notice when you think you are just going to take a few moments to relax that its really hard to shut your mind off instead of thinking about what you should be doing or what is going to be happening next? We need to prepare to rest, and one of things we prepare to do during the Sabbath is have spiritual rest - time to rest and focus on God.

How do you prepare for the Sabbath?

What does spiritual rest look like in your life?

Prayer: Lord, we are a people of extremes. Sometimes we need lots of rules to help us observe the Sabbath and other times we become far too lax, thinking of the Sabbath as an hour of worship instead of a day of rest. Help us to truly embrace the Sabbath, Lord, and be a people who find our spiritual rest and renewal in you. Amen.

Wednesday: “Do Good” - Luke 6: 6-11

Things or periods of time are holy because God alone says that they are holy. God places definition around how we experience time, including the Sabbath. There were periods of time when folks were much better at keeping the Sabbath (or in the case of this scripture they faced dire consequences if they did not follow God's commands). Today, we seem to take pleasure or find honor in working through the Sabbath, and then we wonder why we are exhausted.

Sabbath is not only a time of spiritual rest but also:

- Physical rest: a time to play and pamper our souls.
- Emotional rest: a time to foster relationships with people who appreciate you just for who you are.
- Intellectual rest: a time to dream and think creatively and be reminded that God is in charge.
- Social rest: a time to pull away from the world that pulls at us

What are you in need of physically and spiritually this day? What space can you make in the celebration of the Sabbath to meet that need?

How do you rest emotionally after an emotional siege?

Prayer: Lord, empower us to rest fully in you. Help us engage our sense in your creation, slow our pace, and remember to create and play. Lord, we know that we cannot celebrate Sabbath apart from you; be our focus during this time. Amen.

Thursday: “On Another Sabbath” - Luke 6: 6-11

The command to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy is number four of the ten commandments. In many ways it speaks both to our worship of God and the way we interact with other people. This particular commandment has deep roots, tracing back to the creation story when God ceased or abstained from activity on the seventh day.

When we abstain from work we are following the loving example of our creator God, who made the very act of rest holy. Remember that the Israelites are receiving this commandment because they are God’s chosen people, they are the beloved of God and therefore they incorporated both God’s commands and example in their way of living.

Why do we celebrate the Sabbath today?

What does the word “abstain” bring to mind for you? How is abstaining tied into the celebration of Sabbath?

Prayer: Lord, we confess that we have become a workaholic people. We focus more on what we can get done, then the meaning what do has in our lives. Set us free from the chains of addiction that bind us to work and free us to live more fully in your presence. Amen.

Friday: “Mountain to Pray” - Luke 6: 12-16

It was not just people that God commanded to rest - but the entire land. In today’s scripture we find that the land is only be used for six consecutive years before lying fallow on the seventh. It was same with any place where produce grew. During that time, only those in need could gather from the land.

Additionally, animals were given a chance to rest instead of laboring on the seventh day. God seemed to notice a need for refreshment in us, in the land, in the animals. All too often we burn through things and people to meet our needs instead of allowing them to rest. This seems to speak to our deep need to use what is around us instead of to allow it to renew. Recently, I was reading a book about farming that spoke to this Biblical principle of renewing the land and how helpful it was to crop production. God knows what we need. God knows what the land needs. We are in need of Sabbath rest.

What block us from following the instructions of God around rest?

Prayer: Lord, we are slow to follow your instructions and quick to go our own ways. We need your help to even begin to be pointed in the right direction. Point us that way now, gracious Lord. The way that leads to life abundant. Amen.