

ATTENTIVENESS

SABBATH



SESSION 4: STOP, REST, DELIGHT, WORSHIP

Main Text:

Psalm 23

Take Home Exercise:

Sabbath Feast



OPENING EXERCISE (15 Minutes)

Spend a moment in prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your time together, and then lead your group through the below exercise.

Throughout this series, we are exploring four elements of Sabbath—stop, rest, delight, and worship. This week we will briefly explore the fourth element—worship. Our stopping, resting, and delighting on Sabbath leave us in wonder, gratitude, and awe of God and his goodness. Worship is our God-glorifying response to who God is and what he has done. The Sabbath is a day for worship that ultimately cultivates a life of worship. Worship is more than just singing; we worship God with the whole of our lives—through giving of our affection, time, resources, work, and surrendered wills to him. Worship is a way of orienting the whole of our lives around God.

Spend a little longer in this opening exercise this week, taking some time to worship together through reading, reflecting, and responding to a psalm. Allow for some time for group members to reflect individually and then to share, pray, and respond to God and his Word together as a group.

Invite two group members to each read Psalm 92 aloud.

After reading the psalm, spend five to ten minutes responding individually in worship. Invite group members to respond freely to God and the passage you just read together however they choose—through art (drawing, coloring, painting), prayer, journaling, writing, silence, etc. It might be helpful to have some extra supplies (paper, markers, colored pencils, paint, pens) available for your group.

Then take some time together to share the words or images from the psalm that evoked awe, wonder, and gratitude toward God.

Consider the following questions as you share:

What word, phrase, or image particularly stood out to you from this Psalm?

What does this Psalm reveal about God's character?

Close this time by responding to God and his Word together in prayer and/or musical worship.

A few suggestions for musical worship are:

“Goodness of God” by Bethel Music

“Great Are You Lord” by All Sons and Daughters

“Great Things” by Phil Wickham

“How Great is Our God” by Chirs Tomlin

OPENING DISCUSSION (15 Minutes)

Spend some time together debriefing the take-home exercise from your last gathering.

Last week, you were encouraged to refrain from spending money for a whole 24 hours as a way of liberating ourselves and others from accumulation and accomplishment. Giving yourselves immense grace, share with the group how this went. Consider the following questions as you share about your Sabbath experience:

Were you able to refrain from spending money? If so, for how long?

What was challenging about this exercise? What was encouraging?

How did you seek to foster a spirit of gratitude throughout the day?

What did this exercise reveal about your spending habits and attachments?

STUDY TOGETHER (20 Minutes)

Lead the study and discussion below for your group.

Have someone in your group read Psalm 23 aloud.

One of the central themes of this psalm is David’s recognition and admission that he is in the control of another, “The Lord is my shepherd...He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside still waters...” The regular practice of Sabbath confronts our perceived sense of control. On Sabbath, we release control and rest in the very presence of God our shepherd. Each week we learn to yield ourselves to the guidance and presence of God, embracing our finitude and limitations. But the psalmist’s promise persists, “he refreshes my soul.” While this psalm does not directly reference Sabbath, the essence of Sabbath permeates the relationship between the psalmist and God the Shepherd. The journey of the Christian life is increasingly learning to yield control to Jesus as you grow in learning to rest in God’s presence, regardless of circumstances. Each week, as we enter the Sabbath, we are given the opportunity to yield again to Jesus and learn to tune our souls to God’s presence.

How has your practice of Sabbath the past few weeks led you to yield your perceived control over your life?

What role does releasing control of your life to Jesus play in your discipleship? In this coming Sabbath, how can you practice the comforting presence of God by releasing your burdens, anxieties, and circumstances to him?

Throughout this series, we have been slowly integrating this four-part framework for Sabbath—Stop, Rest, Delight, Worship. Watch this brief video together, reviewing each element, and then lead your group through the following discussion.

Video 4 - Stop, Rest, Delight, Worship

Rather than simply talking about Sabbath, we want to be a



people who begin to embrace and experience the gift of Sabbath as we practice it. Kevin unpacked the framework of stop, rest, delight, and worship and walked us through his typical Sabbath day. These four elements of Sabbath are not a rule for Sabbath, but rather, a guide as you consider what your Sabbath day will look like. This will likely look different for each person in this group.

Take some time now to discuss the sermon from the fourth week (March 26) as a group:

What resonated with you from the teaching this week? What encouraged you? Was there anything that you found to be particularly challenging?

Which of the four elements (stop, rest, delight, and worship) are you most naturally inclined to? Which of the four elements is the most challenging for you?

What might it look like for you to intentionally practice Sabbath in the context of community?

What lingering questions, fears, or reservations might you have about developing a Sabbath rhythm?

Sabbath is a weekly reminder of God's deliverance and redemptive plan. What might be some Pharaohs in your life that you feel enslaved or attached to?

Look again at Deuteronomy 5:14. Sabbath is intended for all people. Inherent in this passage is a warning for the Israelites and also for us. If we are not careful, we, like Egypt, can become the oppressor. How might this be a significant warning for us? How does this challenge you personally?

PRACTICE THIS TOGETHER (15 Minutes)

In our last gathering, we discussed and came up with a plan for our Sabbath preparation, whether that looks like setting aside a few hours the day prior to our Sabbath, or a few hours throughout the week. This week, we will consider what it looks like to plan for our Sabbath day itself. Again, the goal of planning is not to completely fill our Sabbath day with activities. It is important that we loosely plan in a way that enables us to move freely and slowly through the day. The goal of planning is to intentionally dedicate this Sabbath day to the Lord as one where we stop, rest, delight, and worship.

Take time now with your group, intentionally considering how you can incorporate rhythms of stop, rest, delight, and worship into your Sabbath day.

Do you have a starting ritual/liturgy for your Sabbath to help you stop? If not, what might you choose as your starting ritual (i.e. lighting a candle, reading a psalm, listening to a song, eating donuts, etc.)? Feel free to be creative with this, and consider, too, how you might invite those who you may Sabbath with into this.

What activities are truly restful for you? What is one activity that you want to intentionally incorporate into your Sabbath rhythm this week?

What are some activities that are delightful for you? In other words, what fills your soul with deep joy?

How do you like to connect with God? What might it look like for you to take an hour or even fifteen minutes during Sabbath this week to worship and commune with God in this way?

TAKE HOME EXERCISE—Create a Sabbath Box (5 Minutes)

Read through the below exercise that each individual will do before your next gathering. Work through any questions people have on what they are to do. Again, it is about practice not perfection. Give yourselves grace.

Below is an exercise, adapted from PracticingtheWay.org, that everyone can try out before the next meeting. Spend a few minutes reading the instructions aloud with the group and discuss any questions that may arise:

Plan a Sabbath feast this week as a way of starting (or ending) your Sabbath in community. Feel the freedom to be creative with how this looks; it could be a potluck, a barbecue, or a three-course meal! Choose what is feasible and life-giving for you and the people you will share this meal with. This could be a meal you plan with family, roommates, or even together as a community group. If a meal or feast is already part of your Sabbath rhythm, invite someone to join your gathering this week—a coworker, neighbor, or friend.

Consider how you might incorporate the elements of stop, rest, delight, and worship as a community during this gathering. Below are a few ideas:

- Turn your phones off and put them away for the meal.
- Build a Sabbath box together. Write down on pieces of paper your worries or concerns and place them in the box, along with phones, laptops, and work-related items.
- Choose a starting ritual for the meal (lighting a candle, reading a psalm, prayer).
- Take some time to bless kids who are present, and also bless each other.
- Share some highlights of the week.
- Spend some time in prayer and thanksgiving together.
- Feast!
- Enjoy conversation, games, and celebrating together.

CLOSE IN PRAYER (5 Minutes)

Close your time by reading the following prayer together. Then take some time to share any prayer requests/updates and pray for each other's upcoming week.

God of rest,
Today we make the active choice
To enter into your rest,
And to join with you
In delighting in this good world you have made,
And dreaming of the perfect world you will remake.

We choose to tune out,
Of demands and deadlines,
Of performance pressures
Of flickering screens
Of that which robs our souls of joy
And the ways in which the world
Seeks to define and shape our identity.

We choose to tune in,
To your affirmation and love,
To the celebration of freedom,
To worship and your word,
To the enjoyment of that which fills our souls with joy,
And reminds us of our identity in Christ,
As a deeply loved children of God.

Amen.