

Sabbath Practices

Stephanie Fritz, Mission Coordinator for Christian Formation

What are Sabbath Practices?

The doctrine of Sabbath is central to our understanding of who we are as children of God. It calls us away from earthly rhythms where we are trapped in cycles of business and production and invites us to embrace holy rhythms.

When we frame our times of communal gathering as Sabbath it helps us understand the importance of stopping so that we might dwell with God and one another.

Communal Practices



Hospitality
Prayer
Service
Storytelling
Retreat

Hospitality

- When we participate in the practice of hospitality, we are affirming the worth of all God's people.
- We are putting the stories of Jesus into action
- We are allowing God's people to share their gifts
- We remember that we were once strangers and might be strangers again

Prayer

- Prayer is speaking to God and allowing God to speak to us.
- The practice of prayer in community is an opportunity for reconciliation with God and with one another so we may go back into the world to bear witness to God's reconciling love.
- There is no one way to pray and all should be welcome to pray—regardless of age and stage. Always explore new ways of praying together

Service

- In Sabbath we engage in activities that are set apart from our everyday activities. The holy activity of service can start within a faith community.
- Practicing service is the “greatest commandment”
- Practicing service is responding to God’s grace for all humankind

Storytelling

- Sharing about ourselves with others about what it means to be children of God is essential to our identity in Christ.
- When we practice storytelling we are encouraging one another in our faith journey's and creating space for vulnerability and authenticity
- Through storytelling we establish ourselves within the long history of God's Sabbath community.
- We slow down and intentionally participate in recalling our own story and listening to others. This imitates what Jesus modeled in community

Retreat

- Retreat is time set apart in order to reconnect with God and remember who we were created to be
- When we retreat as community, we allow time to tend to relationships. We can be more fully present
- When retreat, we are reminded that Jesus modeled a life of rest and reflection in order to live a life of service

Practices in the season of Lent

Lent is a time where we often set-aside time to refocus and refresh our spiritual disciplines. How might practices be a part of your season?

Ideas for Lent

01

Do a deep dive into each practice for your education hour or even your worship service. Start with Sabbath.

02

Focus on practices for materials that you send into homes for Lent. Ask households to intentionally focus on a different practice each week

03

Think about how Jesus embodies these practices and build a sermon series or education series around this

Hospitality, Storytelling and Prayer

Make a commitment to hospitality as a practice during Lent. Look at your online practices or how you socially distance and still extend hospitality.

Introduce new small on-line groups committed to connecting one another—infuse storytelling and prayer into these groups.

Storytelling

- Have church members record videos throughout Lent sharing their story around a particular prompt. Make sure there is a way for all ages to share—short is ok!

Retreat and Service

- Encourage households to participate in technology free retreats—they may be for a few days or for a few hours. Equip them with how to spend this time together
- Have service opportunities during Lent that households can do on their own time.

Prayer, Retreat and Storytelling

Develop small prayer retreats for households. Allow them to hold these in their own time throughout the season. Come together to share about the experience. Make them intergenerational!