

“In our own contemporary context of the rat race of anxiety, the celebration of Sabbath is an act of both resistance and alternative.”

Walter Brueggemann, *Sabbath as Resistance*.

Sabbath (a day of rest) is not simply stopping work; it is learning to receive life as a gift from God. Rest creates space in which we remember that God is God, and we are not.

Reflect

Genesis 2:1–3: Rest within God's rhythm

The first thing Scripture tells us about Sabbath is that God rested. Having completed his work of creation, God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.

This does not mean that God was tired or needed to recover. Rather, God's resting establishes a rhythm within creation: work and rest, activity and stillness, doing and receiving, producing and rejoicing.

Rest is therefore not an interruption to God's purposes. It is part of them. Human beings are created to participate in God's rhythm. We are not machines whose value depends upon constant productivity. Sabbath reminds us that the world continues because God sustains it, not because we keep everything going.

Mark 2:23–28: Rest as God's gift

When Jesus' disciples pick grain on the Sabbath, the Pharisees challenge them. Jesus responds by reminding them that “*the Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath.*”

Jesus protects the Sabbath from becoming a burden. Its purpose is human flourishing.

Sabbath is therefore not primarily about rules but about relationship: your relationship with God, with creation and with others. It creates a space where we can receive rather than achieve.

Respond

The following simple practice has helped many Christians cultivate an inward rhythm of rest at the end of each day.

This coming week, at the end of each day, set aside 10 minutes before going to bed, or simply practise it quietly in bed as you prepare to fall asleep. Allow yourself to slow down, become aware of God's presence, and gently place the day into his hands.

Commune with God through four simple movements:

THANK *What was good?*

What are you grateful for? Where did you notice God's goodness, provision, beauty, kindness or presence?

RELEASE *What was heavy?*

A difficult conversation. Something that has gone wrong. A worry about tomorrow. Something you cannot change or control.

RECEIVE *Where do I need grace?*

Where did you fall short? Where were you impatient, unkind, selfish, anxious or simply not the person you wanted to be?

Don't dwell on it or condemn yourself. Confess it and receive God's forgiveness.

REST *Let the day go*

*Into your hands, Lord, I place my mind and body,
the joys and burdens I have shared,
the successes and the shortcomings.
Give me the gift of rest tonight,
that I may rise tomorrow
refreshed and ready to live and work to
your praise and glory. Amen.*