

Thank you for joining Mission72 as we journey into a month of Sabbath during July. We believe God is wanting to do something new at Mission72 and is using the principles of Sabbath and Jubilee to prepare our hearts for what He is doing. Please enter this time with intention and plan ahead with structure, such as daily communion or time set aside. Then be willing to go ahead with what the Holy Spirit is doing in the moment.



Sabbath is an opportunity to keep us from being hard-hearted and tight-fisted. It teaches us to be generous and not to be tied to our possessions, otherwise, our wealth or poverty can become our identity.

Prayer: God of the globe, and indeed of the whole cosmos, help us to move beyond the fences we erect to see the expansiveness of your gracious call. Guide us as we look beyond the boundaries that block us from those we may label as "others". And as our vision expands, nudge us to consider uncomfortable truths and to take risky actions. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

What would you like to achieve by taking a Sabbath rest in July?

Revisit your list of Sabbath activities in which you and your family normally engage on a typical Sabbath day (Sunday). How have you done this week eliminating and reducing the activities that do not provide Sabbath restfulness? How have you resisted consumerism and the media? Did you follow through blessing someone in your sphere of influence?

Sabbath is the great equalizer. In society not everyone produces or consumes the same, but on Sabbath we are all equally at rest. In a society defined by production and consumption, there are huge gradations of performance and, therefore, of worth and significance. How do you view others in a different social or economic class than you? Do you treat people differently based on this?

On the Sabbath: you do not have to do more; you do not have to sell more; you do not have to control more; you do not have to know more; you do not have to have your kids in best clothes, programs, schools, etc; you do not have to be younger or more beautiful; you do not have to be more. Think on the ways you "strive" and ask the Lord to speak to you doing "more".

In the coming week, contemplate Deuteronomy 5:12-14 and compare it to the instruction in Exodus 20, noticing "that they may rest like you". Pray the prayer on the back of this sheet in your daily quiet time. Identify for yourself what patterns of society and consumerism you succumb to and explore how practicing Sabbath can help you experience freedom.

Deuteronomy 5:12-14

¹² "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you.

¹³ Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

¹⁴ but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do.

We remember the old harsh days of master and slave;

some were ruthless, demanding, unforgiven, others (most of us!) were fated to urgent performance.

But then you vetoed those presumed arrangements when we walked through the waters of freedom and we found ourselves with no commandment but to love neighbor.

We know now, in our own experience, that it takes a neighborhood to make a life.

We could not, however, sustain that alternative for very long.

We fell back to old patterns.

Some of us became slaves again:

some ended in hopeless debt;

some bonded to addictions that came to define us;

some frozen in deathly emotions;

some enlisted into the rat race that we cannot win.

Some of us, by luck or by hustle or by blessing, became masters:

we made money and could leverage others;

we gained property and with it clout;

we earned pedigrees and came out on top;

we got credentials that entitle us to more;

we outmatched our fellows and came to command them.

Without notice, we have returned to the old grind of master and slave,

brick, quoters and

hostility and

exploitation and alienation.

It all happened without notice;

we find ourselves recruited in a hopeless, graceless contest of greed.

You, however, call us back to neighbor.

You put in front of us our hired help, the worker class, the service industry, immigrants, the hopeless poor.

They are so unlike us who manage and administer and control.

Except that in your emancipatory presence, they are so like us,

entitled to rest,

assigned to dignity,

assured of viability,

intended for security.

They are like us, permitted rest and leisure, respect and well-being.

We are on the way from master-slave to neighbor.

It is not an easy way, and we go there reluctantly.

But we go there because of you.

You are our first Good Neighbor.

And you intend us all to be good neighbors,

not on top of the heap to feather, our nest or nest egg, not at the bottom of the pile to gravel in

despair.

But neighbor, bonded only to mercy, compassion, justice, and generosity.

Give us courage to be on this journey together. Amen.

Material from Sabbath as Resistance by Walter Brueggeman