

a Family Sabbath

Planning for Sabbath in 6 Simple Steps

Gather around the table, eat some yummy food, maybe even put on some quiet but fun music in the background if you like, and get some creative brainstorming happening!

Step 1: Determine what brings you joy/rest

Everyone feels joy and rest differently. This will help you understand how each member of your family feels when it comes to rest.

Questions to ask your family:

1. What makes you feel more energetic/positive after completing it?
2. What things feel like a “get to”?
3. What things make you feel excited/peaceful/pleased?
4. What is your favourite thing to eat?
5. What is your most favourite thing to do in the whole world?

Write these ideas down – either on the computer/paper/poster board – don’t censor any ideas yet, this is just the brainstorming part!

Step 2: Determine what work is.

Just like with rest, we all have different things that drain us. List them now!

Questions to ask your family:

1. Which things make you feel tired/drained after completing it?
2. Which things feel like a “have to” or a “chore”?
3. What things make you feel worried/hurried/stressed/cranky?
4. What is something you hate eating?
5. What is your least favourite thing to do in the whole world?

Write these ideas down too!

Step 3: Determine how you each connect best with God.

1. How do you connect with God best?
2. Is it by yourself or in community?
3. Is it reading the Bible? Listening to a worship song? Praying? Attending church? Serving?
4. Where do you feel God’s presence the most? At church? Outside? Listening to worship music? Serving? Reading?
5. What are ways we can honor God with the time we have this day?

Step 5: Make a Sabbath Plan

With your family, list out the definite “don’ts” for Sabbath (the results of the work list that you all agree upon) and the “do’s” list (the results of the joy list that you can all agree upon).

Put a ***BIG STAR*** beside the “do’s” that also help people feel connected to God. That is the sweet spot.

Don’t forget to include the “non-negotiables” on the list.

- Time for Worship/God Connection
- Family Time
- Time period – will it be 4 hours, 6, 8, 12 to start? (eventually you want to get to the full 24 hours!)

Then, make a plan. Just like other things in life, rest takes PREPARATION! Just like we plan our vacations, meals, or work days, we also need to plan our rest days. Consider making a ***flexible*** schedule of what your Sabbath Day could look like.

Make sure you also plan some time the day before to do whatever you need to do (cooking, cleaning, shopping, chores, homework, etc.) so that when your Sabbath day arrives, you can enjoy it without stressing over all the things you didn’t do.

Step 4: Pray over your lists and discuss some more.

Some of the “hot topic” items that might come up are things like tech (tv, video games, etc.), shopping (is ok to do this on our rest day?), and seeing friends/family.

- Take some extra time to talk through any hot topics that you can’t agree upon. Be willing to listen to each person’s viewpoint on why they think an item should be on the REST or WORK list.
- The best way to find unity about these topics is to PRAY! Let the Holy Spirit guide you and your family into this gift of Sabbath – be gentle with each other and yourselves as you navigate this
- If you are still having trouble deciding what makes the “do’s” list, ask these questions:
 - a. Does it bring our family together or isolate us?
 - b. Does it drain anyone at the thought of doing this thing?
 - c. Is it something I can do any other day?

Step 6: Give it a try!

That’s it! Now you’re ready to go!

Set a date for your first real Sabbath...recognizing it won’t be perfect.

Commit to taking hold of this gift in all it’s complexity and ask God to help you in that.



Tips for Sabbath with kids and youth:

- It might be wise to ease in slowly – especially if your children are older and already quite independent already
- Don't feel pressure to jump into a full 24-hour as a family right away. Consider starting with a half day, or a 6-8 block of time, while still communicating to your family that your desire is to eventually get to the full 24-hour goal. Then, you can work towards a full 24-hours over the course of several week.
- Make it FUN – focus on the things you GET to do (like take naps, play fun games, arts&crafts) and on some of the things you don't HAVE to do (like homework!)
- Think through your opinion on hot topic issues before your Sabbath Meeting such as:
 - Can we use technology or have screen time on Sabbath? If so, for how long? Could we start with some time, and then limit it more and more until we can eliminate it?
 - Is it ok to eat out/order in instead of cooking, or do we want to prep simple foods in advance?
 - Do we want to spend the whole time together as a family, or should we designate personal/alone time too?
 - What about commitments that might be fun for some, but not for others (e.g. sports commitments, family commitments, etc.). How will you talk through these with your kids?
- Sometimes kids/youth aren't always feeling the “God Connect” time... so are there ways it could be fun? Could you ask each family member to prepare something short and fun to present to the family: a song, poem, drawing, scripture, story, skit, prayer, etc. to get the kids involved in leading the devo part of your day?

Some ideas for honoring God with our time:

- Write a letter to and pray for our international workers Lizette in Guinea, or Cara and Wade in Central Asia
- Write an encouraging note or card to someone
- Take a treat or meal to someone to cheer them up, help them out, or just because!
- Start a favorite bible verses journal/book – add to it each week
- Make phone calls to loved ones or friends you haven't spoken to in a while
- Object lesson challenge: have every member of the family pick an object from around the house and come up with a story about how that items can be used to illustrate the Good News about Jesus
- Create a skit or play about a Bible story