

Sabbath Notes

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” – Exodus 20:8

Genesis 2:2-3

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” – Mark 2:27

Exodus 16:2-5, 17-30

In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. ³ The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the LORD’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.”

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. ⁵ On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days.”

¹⁷ The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. ¹⁸ And when they measured it by the omer, he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little. Each one gathered as much as he needed.

¹⁹ Then Moses said to them, “No one is to keep any of it until morning.”

²⁰ However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them.

²¹ Each morning everyone gathered as much as he needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away. ²² On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much—two omers for each person—and the leaders of the community came and reported this to Moses. ²³ He said to them, “This is what the LORD commanded: ‘Tomorrow is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.’”

²⁴ So they saved it until morning, as Moses commanded, and it did not stink or get maggots in it. ²⁵ “Eat it today,” Moses said, “because today is a Sabbath to the LORD. You will not find any of it on the ground today. ²⁶ Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any.”

²⁷ Nevertheless, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather it, but they found none. ²⁸ Then the LORD said to Moses, “How long will you refuse to keep my commands and my instructions? ²⁹ Bear in mind that the LORD has given you the Sabbath; that is why on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Everyone is to stay where he is on the seventh day; no one is to go out.” ³⁰ So the people rested on the seventh day.

Sabbath Lessons

1. Your work does not define you
2. You were created to rest

“If we do not allow for a rhythm of rest in our overly busy lives, illness becomes our Sabbath—our pneumonia, our cancer, our heart attack, our accidents create Sabbath for us.” (Wayne Muller, *Sabbath*)
1. The world goes on without you
2. God is in control – not you

Sabbath keeping is more than just taking a day of rest; it is a way of ordering one’s life around a pattern of working six days and then resting on the seventh.

Principles of the Sabbath (from Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms*)

1. We cease from our work so that we can rest and delight in God and his gifts
2. Establish a regular rhythm if possible
3. Make the Sabbath a familial/communal event

What to Exclude on the Sabbath

1. Work
2. Buying and selling
3. Worry

Sabbath Goals

1. Resting the body
2. Replenishing the spirit

Discussion Questions

1. What is most appealing to you about the idea of taking a sabbath?
2. Where do you feel resistance?
3. As you think about your sabbath day, what activities will you refuse to engage in so that it is truly a day of rest, worship and delight?
4. How will you incorporate activities that bring you joy?

Suggested Reading

- *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation*, Ruth Haley Barton
- *Sabbath as Resistance: Saying No to the Culture of Now*, Walter Brueggemann
- *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, And Delight In Our Busy Lives*, Wayne Muller