
Session: Family Sabbath

Description

My husband Craig and I have flipped (kept and sold) rental properties for about twenty years. At this point we have sold most of them, but our process was to purchase the worst-looking houses in the nicest neighborhoods and then lovingly renovate them. We made them new again. We did the work ourselves, both of us having fulltime jobs, sometimes working late into the evenings and on weekends. One time we restored a meth house (hazmat suits and breathing masks included). Another time we purchased a hoarder's house, cleaning it out ourselves. Their dog had been using the living room carpet as a potty pad and the water had been shut off for months. That one took nose plugs, bandanas over our faces, lots of sweat and even a few tears. Many times, we had to take these homes all the way down to the studs because of dry rot or termites. But little by little, broken, dirty bit by bit we walked into the darkest corners, scrubbed them clean, painted them and made them new again.

I think this is what God does with us. We are so busy dashing from activity to activity, commitment to commitment that we barely notice what's going on inside us. Amidst the clatter of this noisy world we surely don't hear God knocking.

We have a choice. We can keep running, keep the doors to our hearts locked up tight. Or we can clear our schedules, open the door, and let God come in and help us do some housekeeping – letting light into the dark places and lovingly renovating us to be all he created us to be.

This is what Sabbath is all about. Making some space each week to spend time with God, family and friends. Spiritual change (soul change) is a bit like the stages of a renovation. It's also similar to a marriage. We move from "acquaintanceship to friendliness to friendship and eventually to union".¹ And just like any good marriage, we need time together. Dallas Willard talks about the "renovation of the soul" which produces not a perfect person, but a person "whose soul is whole". Not a face lift for the soul, but a renovation -making us new again.

In this session, your family will take a Sabbath. First, you'll learn a little about Sabbath and then you can decide as a family how you want to spend the day. Warning! You may like it so much you decide to take one every week!

Materials Needed

See Sabbath Ideas Handout. Materials will be based on your choice of family Sabbath activities.

Handouts

Sabbath Ideas Handout

Family Sabbath

Read aloud the quote or scripture

Centering Prayer

There are times when I am with you
When there is no beginning or ending of time
When the day is dateless
And the rhythm of time
Has ceased to record the hours
And the calendar, the days;
When no birds sing, but rest;
And no winds blow but breathe.
And the air is drenched
With the white silence of love
And my fingers trace
The lineaments of your face.
Brother Thomas More Page

Questions for discussion (10 minutes)

1. Do you think there is value in having a day of rest each week? Why or why not?
2. Do you think God values rest? Why or why not?
3. What are some of the benefits of spending an entire day each week playing, napping, eating, praying, going for a walk, being still? Are there negatives?
4. If the idea of spending a whole day doing nothing causes you any anxiety, why do you think that is?
5. What are some different ways you think your family could “spend time with God” together?

Rule of life activity

Family Sabbath

1. For families who would like to read a scripture on Sabbath read aloud Exodus 20:8-11.
 2. This week you are going to choose a day to take a Sabbath!
 3. Before you choose which day to have your Sabbath, get the Sabbath Ideas Handout.
 4. Read aloud the Sabbath Description at the top of the page.
 5. Now, knowing what a Sabbath is and why families take one, decide if you want to plan nothing that day – just play it by ear, or if you want to select some Sabbath activities on the list.
 6. If you want to consider Sabbath activities, read through the list and highlight the ones that sound good to your family.
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Practice

MINDFULNESS



7. Hint: Don't plan too many things. The idea is to rest and enjoy the day just being with each other and with God.
8. Once you've chosen the day and what you want to do that day, block out your calendars for that day.
9. Enjoy your Sabbath! If you like it, you might try doing a Sabbath once a month or even once a week.

Examen

How did it go? Debrief highs and lows

1. Each person shares their favorite part of the conversation / activity and why.
2. Each person shares their least favorite part and why
3. Did you do a Serving/Giving activity last week? How did it go?

Serving /giving ideas for any time this week: Choose one or create your own. These can be done individually or as a group. You will be sharing your serving experience in the next session.

- Smile and say hello to someone new.
- Purchase a hot meal and give it to someone in need.
- Ask someone their goals and do what you can to help them achieve one of them.
- For a whole day let others speak before you. Listen more than you speak.
- Purchase a book for someone.

ⁱ James C. Wilhoit, "Centering Prayer," in *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, ed. Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis, 180-197 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 187.