

Honouring the Sabbath

“Remember the Sabbath, and keep it holy.” (Exodus 20: 8)

Top ten lists are all the rage and look where we find this one – number 4! This isn't one of the “you shall not” commandments. This one is God's invitation to us to “Stop what you are doing. Now. Remember me. Breathe. Listen for my voice. I want to be with you – will you make space for me?”

A rabbi taught that every person needs to set aside twenty-four hours for the Sabbath, a time to listen for God, to dwell in the holy – but if your life is so busy that you cannot do that, then set aside 12 hours, and if your life is so busy ...6, ...3, ...1 and if your life is so busy that you cannot set aside one hour for Sabbath – then want to.

In this spiritual practice you are invited to take time to develop Sabbath rituals that nurture the soul.

Some components of Sabbath rituals are Rest, Renewal and Recreation.

Rest

To rest in the spiritual sense means to spend time with God, practicing spiritual disciplines – prayer, meditation, contemplation, journaling, walking – opening us to know and experience the presence of God.

Create a “Sabbath box” in which you place all those things that you do not want to use. Wayne Muller in *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in our Busy Lives* (Bantam, 1999) suggests that we use the Sabbath box to hold all the things we need to leave behind when we enter “sacred rest.” These include cell phones, computer discs, homework, a list of things left undone, TV guide and remote, credit cards, office keys ...

Physical rest is also important. Our bodies need time to rest. Take time on Sunday to nap, eat leisurely, walk, exercise, play games, visit friends and relatives, read and tell stories, sing, gaze at the stars ...

Renewal

Regular participation in worship and spending time with the church community can be renewing and nurture our relationships with God and with each other. What else offers you time of renewal – make time to engage in these renewing activities/relationships.

When we embrace time as God's time, people as God's unique creations, ourselves as God's loved ones with a unique calling, we are embracing God's Shalom, seeking wholeness for ourselves and the world.

Re-creation

Discover what energizes you. Spend some time each Sabbath engaging in this activity. Participate in some form of re-creation either as individuals or as a family group. Consider a “rainbow walk” or a “senses walk” – plan the walk to include not only the physical movement

but also to focus your awareness on items of God's created world that capture the colours of the rainbow, or use all your senses – what can you see, taste, touch, smell, hear.

Engage your whole body and discover the re-creation that happens when you are fully present in the moment.

A Time of Sabbath:

As you move into this Sabbath time set apart from your daily routine, you are invited to take a moment to breathe in God's presence in this time and place –

In your Sabbath time, take in long and slow cleansing, refreshing breaths – breathe in - and in the breathing know God's presence with you; breathe out – and in the breathing know God's presence with you.

Breathe in and know God's presence always with us, the Giver of Life and in gratitude give thanks for

The wondrous created world

The laughter of a loved one

The familiar words of a loved song

The feel of a pet nestled close to our body

The touch of a child

The trust of a friend

The beauty of the day ...

Give thanks to God for this moment.

Enjoy and cherish (hold close to your heart) your Sabbath moments!