



FORMATION

Embracing the gift of **SABBATH**

HOW ARE YOU DOING?

- Turn to the person next to you and tell them how you think you're doing right now.
- On a scale of 1-10, how are you... Physically? Emotionally? Financially? Spiritually?



THE WAY WE ARE

- UK adults spend an average of 8 hours 41 minutes a day on screens (more time than they are asleep).
- 62% adults 'hate' how much time they spend on their phones.
- UK adults now spend a total of 25 hours a week online – up from 9 hours a week in 2005.
- We work more hours than any other European country - and thanks to technology we take work with us everywhere.

THE WAY WE ARE

- 1 in 4 of us experience a mental health problem in any given year.
- 500,000 people have symptoms of burnout in any given year.
- In 2018, the value of the 'health and wellness' market in the UK was £23 billion, and it goes up every year.
- 16 million UK adults suffer from sleepless nights, 31% of whom say they have insomnia. More than 1 in 10 take sleeping pills or drink alcohol to aid sleep.

DISCUSS

Clearly, we are tired, restless and addicted to tech!

- Do these statistics and facts surprise you?
- Do you see echoes of this in your own rhythm of life?
- **Must** we live this way in the modern world?

GOD'S GOOD GIFT

“So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. On the seventh day God had finished His work of creation, so He rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when He rested from all His work of creation.”

- Genesis 2:1-3

GOD'S GOOD GIFT

“Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. That includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day He rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.”

- Exodus 20:8-11

THE WORLD'S WAYS

The Jewish Approach:

Shabbat - Rest, desist, cease, celebrate

Sundown Friday to Sundown Saturday

Some see it as the route to salvation, but is it?

Strict rules and procedures for everything from bottles and bog roll to skyscrapers and Scrabble



THE WORLD'S WAYS

Other Approaches:

- Stress, burnout and even, ironically, unproductivity

USSR 1929: 5-day weeks (more days 'off')

France 1790s: 10-day weeks (fewer days 'off')

- Vague and dissatisfying leisure 'weekends' (Modern Western Civilisation)

WHAT WAS GOD AFTER?

- Resting from work
- Enjoying creation
- Celebrating God's greatness
- Connecting with people
- Acknowledging your limits



DISCUSS

- How might sabbathing well help you achieve these things (Resting from work, enjoying creation, celebrating God's greatness, connecting with people, acknowledging your limits)?
- Which is the hardest for you?
- Which are you most excited about pursuing more?

BUT...WHAT IS WORK?

- Work is what you need to do to live.
- Rest is what you need to do to **live**.
- Work includes household chores, life admin, anything you're paid to do, supporting people in need.

A SABBATH-SHAPED WEEK

- Six days of 'work' (with moments of rest).
- One day of 'rest' (with as little work as possible).
- This rhythm frees us to work on the other six days.
- A day off paid work is **not the same** as a sabbath.
- The Sabbath is not a licence to be lazy.

A SABBATH-SHAPED WEEK

Observing a Sabbath leads to:

- Dependence
- Perspective
- Obedience
- Gratitude
- Space



GETTING PERSONAL

- Friday dinner - Saturday dinner is Matt's Sabbath.
- My work day off is Friday. I do various chores, admin, some exercise, and sometimes I do a few work tasks.
- After Saturday dinner, once the kids are asleep, I focus on Sunday (as that is important to my job).



GETTING PERSONAL

- Read (ideally not work-related)
- Pray
- Stay in PJs as long as possible
- Go for a run or family walk
- Eat nice things
- Put music on
- Spend time with Naomi and the kids (sometimes 1-2-1 with Anita)
- Watch football
- Friday evening film and glass of wine with Naomi
- Go to bed earlier
- Meet up with friends (maybe from church, but not in a work context)
- Avoid email, and only respond to emergency work texts/calls

GETTING PERSONAL

How this shapes my week:

- I see the rest of the week as 'work' in the broadest sense.
- I look forward to Friday!
- I'm more focussed.
- I think about Sunday having just rested on Saturday.
- I essentially have a day 'on holiday' every week.
- I feel lighter and less responsible.
- I appreciate creation more in all senses.
- I look forward to holidays rather than needing them.

GETTING PERSONAL

My challenges:

- The temptation to **get ahead** on a few work tasks.
- The temptation to **check emails**.
- **Ignoring God** for the day in the name of relaxation.
- **Self-indulgent** use of time.
- Getting the right mix with **young children** is hard.
- **Balancing my preferences** (introverted) with Naomi's (more extroverted) can also be hard.

A FEW WARNINGS

1. Adopting Sabbath practices without God at the centre **will benefit you but not as much** as God intended.
2. Sabbath practices will **help** but they won't solve all your deepest problems around rest, anxiety, and addiction. Only Jesus can do that.

DISCUSS

- Has anything particularly stood out to you this evening?
- Do you see that God intended Sabbath as a gift?
- What for you is the best thing about it? What would you struggle with?

FURTHER DISCUSSION...

- Should attending church be part of one's sabbath?
- How does sabbath work in retirement? What about those with shift-based work?
- How would you explain sabbath in a positive, down-to-earth way to a friend who is not a Christian?

PRAY

- Pray for one another as you look to grow in experiencing and enjoying the rest God gifts you.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- *Sabbath Rest* - Mark Scarletto
- *An Unhurried Life* - Alan Fadling
- *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* - Pete Scazzero
- *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* - John Mark Comer
- *The Rest of God* - Mark Buchanan

