


THE SIX PRACTICES OF WHOLE-HEARTED DISCIPLESHIP

THE PRACTICE OF PACE



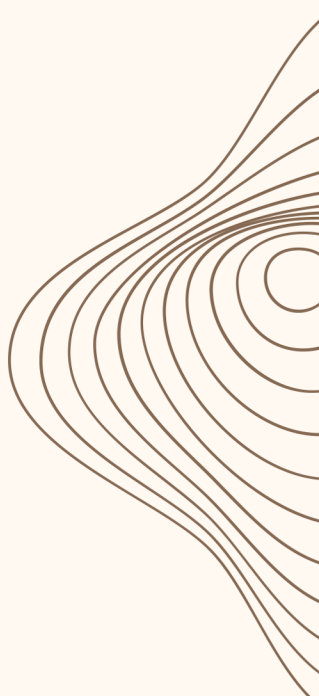
COMMUNITY PRACTICE GUIDE



One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"

He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions."


Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."



Mark 2:23-27

Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Luke 5:15-16





PAUSE

Take sixty seconds and pause, silently remembering God's presence with you today.

Pray this prayer of God's people from Psalm 92:

The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,
they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;
planted in the house of the Lord,
they will flourish in the courts of our God.
They will still bear fruit in old age,
they will stay fresh and green,
proclaiming, "The Lord is upright;
he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him."

READ & REFLECT

Read Mark 2:23-27 and Luke 5:15-16 twice out loud.

What surprises you or stands out to you about Jesus in these teachings?

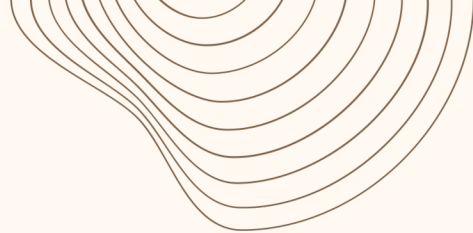
On a scale of 1-10, how busy is your...

- Work schedule?
- Social / activities schedule?
- Mind?
- Inner emotional / spiritual life?

When you hear the word Sabbath, what comes to mind?

What's something life-giving that you wish you had more time for?





THE PRACTICE OF PACE

The Practice of Pace means this:

We embrace healthy rhythms of rest and work for long-term health over short-term gains.

Jesus redefines the Sabbath around its original intention: enjoying God and his good gifts of life, relationships, and creation. In this teaching, Jesus shows us that David's humanity is more sacred than the religious activity of the temple. In other words, God invites us on the Sabbath to be human, to trust him to provide for us, and to enjoy the life that he has given us.

The Sabbath is the longest of the Ten Commandments and in both instances where God commands it, he provides two different reasons, both of which we need to be reminded of in our busy lives today:

- **In Exodus 20**, the Sabbath is a reminder of God's rest in creation, inviting us to consider the rhythms of work and rest God has built into his world. In our always-on, always-going world, we need to be reminded that rest is part of God's intention for our lives, that God is in control and we are not, and that if God can rest, then so can we.
- **In Deuteronomy 5**, God reiterates the Sabbath, this time reminding his people that they weren't created to be slaves to work, but to trust in the saving work of God on their behalf. In our performance-driven world, Sabbath is a demonstration of the gospel of grace, reminding us that we don't have to prove our worth but we can trust the God who has provided our salvation through the completed work of Jesus.

Embracing a healthy rhythm of work and rest means saying **YES** to trusting God and enjoying our humanity and God's good gifts by saying **NO** to the constant demand on our time and attention. As we learn to say **YES** to God and **NO** to everything else for a 24 hour period, we move deeper into letting Jesus lead our emotional and spiritual lives, where we are often driven to prove our worth through our productivity and performance.





ASK

"There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. " (Heb. 4:9-10)

Take a few moments and prayerfully ask God these questions:

- Does my schedule and current pace of life demonstrate that I trust you?
- What good gift have you given me that I have been neglecting because of the pace of my life?

YIELD

This week we consider one practice: the practice of Sabbath-keeping, setting aside a period of time to step out of the busyness and rest in God's goodness.

How to Begin Practicing Sabbath:

1. **Pick a time.** Select a 24 hour period of time in your week. You will likely need to move some things around in your schedule to make this happen.
2. **Say Yes** to God and his good gifts that bring you life. Consider including in your Sabbath practice time for **Jesus** (worship, prayer, community, solitude, etc.); time for **rest** (habits or activities that restore or rejuvenate you); and time for **joy** (good food, celebration, spending time with friends, and enjoying God's good gifts in creation).
3. **Say No** to everything that gets in the way of what you need to say YES to. Consider saying no to things that distract you, stress you out, or tempt you to be productive, prove yourself, or perform during this 24 hour period (e.g. email, notifications on your phone, side hustles, social media, chores, etc.)

Remember, the purpose of Sabbath-keeping isn't to keep the Sabbath, it's to enjoy God's presence and his gifts. The moment you find yourself being hard on yourself or striving, you might be trying too hard. Start where you are and trust God to provide.

A Note on Sabbath with Kids:

- If you have kids at home, include them in the planning process! Keep things simple so you can be present: pizza, a favorite family movie, a trip to the zoo, a family hike. Don't put so much weight on the details of the practice that it becomes a burden to your love and life together.

A Note on Work Schedule:

- You may find yourself with a job situation where your schedule is unpredictable or you can't take a day off. Start where you are with what time you have, even if it's not the same time every week. Sabbath is a community project, so don't be afraid to ask for help.
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