

# Family Reflections to Accompany Our Sabbath Study

## Session One

**Opening Reflection:** *In the sweetness of time together we experience the presence of God. Watching each other do well in life is a chance for us to bear witness to God's graces.  
Through our growing and changings, we continue the majestic work of God creating in our here and now.  
As each day holds similarities to the days before we invite God to make them holy through our laughter, listening, and loving.*

### **Reflection Questions:**

What does your family feel and experience as they get ready to go to church?

How do you feel on your way home from church?

In what ways do we value the acts of play and creativity in our family?

When you think of rest what does it mean for your family to experience rest?

How might your family take Sabbath from feeling like a "churchy" word to one that has a practical role in your life?

**Closing Prayer:** *Through the items of our schedules give us the awareness of where rest, play, and creativity can give us practices of Sabbath. When we look in the faces of one another, help us see the beauty of creation that we are. In a world that feels so fast paced we ask for time to be together as a family - time for rest, time for laughter, time for hope. As we actively seek Sabbath moments, God of grace, bless us with courage and patience to lean into those moments more and more each time.  
Amen.*

## Session Two

**Opening Reflection:** *God delights in your life.  
God names you beloved.  
God takes joy in our joy.  
God loves us without limits.  
God meets you in the here and now.  
God knows you and is pleased with your creation.*

### **Reflection Questions:**

What stories in the Bible come to mind when you think about Sabbath?

What do those stories teach you about Sabbath?

What images come to mind when you think about God taking a rest from Creation?

Is there a Sabbath moment your family practices? If there is, what is that practice and how does it feel when you practice it?

How does your family understand the purpose of the commandments and does that have an impact on your views of Sabbath being a commandment?

**Closing Prayer:** *God of creation, help us take comfort in knowing that you too took rest. That in our lives it is not wrong for us to take a rest from work tasks, homework, chores, or running from one event or practice to the next. Help us to find rest throughout our days and weeks. As a family, may we support one another in what rest looks like for each of us and together as a family. Guide us to know what Sabbath looks like for us in this season of our life together. Amen.*

### Session Three

**Opening Reflection:** *God of forgiveness and hope, help us be present with each other throughout our days. When it feels like we spend more of our days trying to survive our schedules than living our lives, grant us time to breathe and check in with ourselves so we can begin to be present. Allowing our stories to be a meaningful guidepost throughout our busy, and at times chaotic, lives.*

#### **Reflection Questions:**

Jubilee is a big bible term and one that can feel very removed from our daily lives, so how might your family reframe this big bible term's core meanings (forgiveness, freedom, hope, and generational grace) to be applied in your lives?

How might your family observe caring for the land and creation to carry on the wisdom of Jubilee's teachings of giving the land rest?

How can your family continue to grow in how you practice forgiveness with one another?

**Closing Prayer:** *God, when we feel like forgiveness is beyond what we can do in this time or in a given situation grant us patience with ourselves to try again another day. As difficult as it can be to practice forgiveness be with us in the why's of our struggling. May we find moments of rest in our practices of forgiveness. Allow us to receive your forgiveness in our own lives and allow that freedom to change how we live. Amen.*

### Session Four

**Opening Reflection:** *Jesus was one who invited those around him to explore what it was to love God, love neighbor, and love self. These were the aspects of faith that anchored his actions and participation in the world. Within each encounter of seeing the person before him he took the teachings of Jewish law and enlarged its understanding to include grace's movement in meeting their*

*needs. Jesus would place the person before the law, not the law before the person - inviting us to remember that the law was created for people and not the other way around.*

**Reflection Questions:**

How does Jesus teaching that the Sabbath can look different to meet the needs of those in front of him impact how your family might change how Sabbath looks in your lives based on the needs of your family?

Does Sabbath feel like something you have to do? If it does feel like something *have* to do, is it a helpful feeling or a hard feeling?

If Sabbath isn't a one-size-fits-all, even as we see it in the bible, how can that help us think differently and creatively about how your family practices Sabbath?

How does your church community play a part in your practices of Sabbath?

If you have a day of the week that captures your Sabbath moments, what day is it and how has that come to be for your family?

**Closing Prayer:**

*God of past, present, and future, In a world where it can feel like our games, choirs, practices, jobs, commitments drive our movement in the world Sabbath can feel distant. Grant us the grace to not beat ourselves up for being driven by these realities. Give us enough pause for us to reflect on how we might be able to take time to be guided by rest and rejuvenation. Guide us to a place of acceptance for the season of life we are in. Through all of this, O God, gift us the surprise of Sabbath moments. And over time may those moments shift from surprise to intentionality.  
Amen.*

**Session Five**

**Opening Reflection:** *Our faith is a beautiful combination of what has been, what will be, and what is. Our faith is not something we have to replicate from the past. Our faith is not something we have to wait to come to us one day in the future. Our faith is not something isolated to this moment in time. Our faith is inspired by our ancestors, challenged by future generations, and stirred by our daily responsibilities. To leave our faith in one of these times - past, present, future - means we miss out on the chance to have our faith be richer in meaning and bigger than just us.*

**Reflection Questions:**

For you, and your family, does it feel as though Sabbath is something that will happen one day but today is not that day? Why or why not?

If Jesus teaches that Sabbath is not something to be left in the past, how might we bring Sabbath moments into our present practices of faith?

What did you learn about Sabbath from your parents, or grandparents? Do you put those lessons about Sabbath into your current Sabbath practices? Why or Why not?

How might your family take the wisdom of how Sabbath was practiced by older generations and combine it with the wisdom of how Sabbath is needed anew in this season of your life?

**Closing Prayer:** *God, the rhythms of life can feel out of balance or at best faster than we can manage to keep up with. As we explore what Sabbath means for our family help us to find harmony in all we have going on. Help us shift our mindsets from having work, school, extracurriculars, friends, and family be in competition with each other. Help us see these various areas of life as a chance to see you working in our lives and working through us to bring about your love in the world. And through it all, may you provide us with moments in our day or in our week when we can breathe deeply and find rest from the constant going. Thank you for being with us in all that we do. Amen.*

### Session Six

**Opening Reflection:** *Theology is our what we believe dressed in flesh and bones. It is our faith lived out. We live our theology regularly without much thought given to it. Sometimes our theologies do not match how we live, and it causes us to pause and ask ourselves, is it my actions that need adjusting or is it my theology that needs to change to match my actions? How can we see these misalignments between our actions and our theology to be an invitation for insights to ourselves rather than an issue with our character or faith?*

### **Reflection Questions:**

Having heard multiple stories in the bible about Sabbath, what have you learned about Sabbath?

How would you summarize these stories of Sabbath - as in what are the key takeaways you have about Sabbath after reading these stories?

If theology is the study of religious beliefs and Sabbath is one of those beliefs, can you take some time to write out what your theology of Sabbath is? Now, can you take time as a family to write your family's theology of Sabbath?

How might asking what our theology of Sabbath is once a year or a few times a year help you as a family support each other in your individual Sabbath practices?

How might asking these questions allow your family to change your collective practices of Sabbath to meet your current needs?

**Closing Prayer:** *God of wisdom and insight, grant us the wisdom to know what we need in this season of life and the insights to know how we can address those needs. May we find time with you to be an important practice for us as parents,*

*children, and a family. Give us a deep and abiding love for each other as we change with the passing of time. Help us to see Sabbath as invitation to connect to each other and to you. As we strive to be the best versions of ourselves help us to be open to how we might make space for the ways we change as individuals and as a family.*  
*Amen.*

### Session Seven

**Opening Reflection:** *Rest. Move. Worship. Feast. Cease. Delight. Community. Friends. Family. Animals. Play. Pray. Give. Each of these can be avenues of practicing Sabbath. There are many ways to express the spiritual practice of Sabbath. What we need to continually explore is how we are intentionally practicing Sabbath. For each of us this will include both individual commitments and communal commitments.*

- Pastor Anne

### **Reflection Questions:**

When it comes to our individual practices of Sabbath, in particular as parents, who else is affected by your individual practices? How are they affected?

Who is affected by your family's practices of Sabbath and how are they affected?

While Sabbath is something you may wish to have a regular spiritual practice of there are many aspects of life that can keep you from living it out. What are those aspects of life at this time?

Using the daily, weekly, monthly, and/or yearly tables in the Sabbath curriculum take time together as a family to sketch out your individual and collective practices of Sabbath.

After you sketch out what your practices might look like take some time to ask each other how you can support one another to continue these practices.

**Closing Prayer:** *God of the heavens and God of the earth, we ask that our beliefs find ways to take shape in how we live our lives and do not just stay in our minds and hearts. We ask that how we live impacts our minds and hearts in ways of healing and expressions of hope. Help us as a family to care for one another as best as we know how. And give us a desire to continue to grow in how we care for each other as we learn to meet one another in our present expression of self. Help us to value our family's practices of Sabbath, just as we value our individual practices.*  
*Amen.*

### Session Eight

**Opening Reflection:** *We are part of the Body of Christ. A body that is incomplete without us. It draws us in to ask ourselves, can we be complete without it. We change how it looks in the world with our uniqueness. We are changed by how it*

*functions in the World. The Body of Christ is us, and we are the Body of Christ  
- forever dancing with each other.*

**Reflection Questions:**

When thinking about your family's participation and involvement at Calvary, how would a congregational practice of Sabbath impact you?

How could Calvary support your family in your practices of Sabbath?

Are there parts of your life with Calvary that feel more like Sabbath than others? Why or why not?

How would a congregational practice of Sabbath help you as a family in the ways you participate or engage at Calvary?

If Calvary had a congregational practice of Sabbath would that impact how your family practiced Sabbath moments at home?

**Closing Prayer:**

*O God, as we explore how Sabbath might be lived out in our family, with our church family, and with ourselves we ask that we are met with meaningful insights, time to practice, and support to engage Sabbath moments. Help us find time to be creative, loving, and brave in this journey of following the teachings of Jesus. May our desire to practice Sabbath be an offering in their own way. When we miss a Sabbath practice remind us to see it as an opportunity to assess that practice. If a Sabbath practice is no longer Sabbath for us grant us the wisdom to try a new practice until we can find a new Sabbath practice. Help our church family encourage, support, and care for our family's Sabbath practices. May we find ways to encourage, support and care for our church family's Sabbath practices as well. In all that we do, O God, help us to see our journey with you as an invitation to be the best expression of our self; keeping us from the grips of shame and guilt when we feel we have made a misstep on this journey. We rest in your hope, peace, joy, and love - God of grace and God of mercy.  
Amen.*