

Sabbath

Week 1: Introduction

Opening question to get to know each other:

Your name, where's home, how you're a part of the Calvin community, why you joined this study.

Read this aloud together

Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it.

Exodus 20:8-11 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

For six weeks this spring, we will practice keeping, learn about, and consider the Sabbath. Marva Dawn's *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly* and A.J. Swoboda's *Subversive Sabbath* will be our guides. Dr. Dawn suggests that there are four expressions that make up the practice of Sabbath keeping: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, and Feasting.

Our goal for this study is to help us as a community and as people live a sabbath way of life by observing a regular, weekly day of rest. Sabbath-keeping means we cease certain things, but it also means taking up other things that bring delight and life. Patience with yourself as we begin. Changing our rhythms and habits to make space for a weekly sabbath will take time, effort, and adjustment. But it is so worth it. Sabbath is a saying no to "hurry sickness"¹ and a yes to life—to embracing sacred time, and remembering and re-living that we are made in the image of God who rested.

Week 1 video: Regent panelists

As we begin our journey of considering and practicing sabbath together, you may watch the first 16 minutes of this [video](http://www.regentredux.net/redux-rewind/freedom-in-the-busy) (www.regentredux.net/redux-rewind/freedom-in-the-busy)

Some discussion questions for your group:

1. What thoughts or experiences arise when you hear *sabbath* or *sabbath keeping*?
2. Anything new or different brought up in the video?
3. What mentioned in the video seem the most life-giving for you? Why?
4. What practices seem the most life-giving for the Calvin community? Why?
5. What practices seem the most challenging for you? Why?
6. What would help you keep sabbath on a regular weekly basis?

PRACTICE: Write it down.

1. Look ahead to your week. **What day and when (time) will you observe sabbath this week?** (Sunday is best communally; if you work on Sunday, which other day?)
2. Identify your sabbath day, write it down. **What is one way you can keep sabbath this week?** (E.g. no homework/work/email on Sunday; share a meal & conversation w/ a friend without rush; take a long leisurely nap or walk; leave your phone in your car while at church). **Write it down. Keep it till next week.**

¹ A.J. Swoboda references John Ortberg in *Subversive Sabbath*.

Pray this Closing Prayer together:

*Lord of Creation,
create in us a new rhythm of life
composed of hours that sustain rather than stress,
of days that deliver rather than destroy,
of time that trickles rather than tackles.*

*Lord of Liberation
By the rhythm of your truth, set us free
from the bondage and baggage that break us,
from the Pharaohs and fellows who fail us,
from the plans and pursuits that prey upon us.*

*Lord of Resurrection,
May we be raised into the rhythm of your new life,
dead to deceitful calendars,
dead to fleeting friend requests,
dead to the empty peace of our accomplishments.*

*To our packed-full planners, we bid, "Peace!"
To our over-caffeinated consciences, we say,
"Cease!"
To our suffocating selves, Lord grant release.*

*Drowning in a sea of deadlines and death chimes,
we rest in you our lifeline
By your ever-restful grace,
allow us to enter your Sabbath rest
as your Sabbath rest enters into us.
In the name of our Creator, our Liberator our
Resurrection and life we pray. Amen*

*From Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary
Radicals by Shane Claiborne and Jonathan Wilson-
Hartgrove*