

Metro Lutheran
Positive Parenting
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FAMILY SABBATH

What was God thinking of, commanding a Sabbath? It's May and demands on our family's time cover every waking moment – and then some. Doesn't God know how busy we are, how much we have to do, how hard it is to keep track of everyone's schedule?

So, what was God thinking of? God wasn't tired after six days of creating. God wasn't trying to ruin your fun by claiming your time and attention. God wasn't giving you just one more rule to live by.

So, really, what was God thinking of? God was thinking of you and your family... and of

- God's love for you and desire to be in relationship with you
- Your need for rest and restoration, for pausing to reflect, for savoring the joyous things in life, for delight
- Time to experience the abundant life Jesus came to bring
- Recharging you before sending you back into the world

What is Sabbath? It may be a day (or week or month) or it may be one deep, intentional, God-filling-you breath. It is an intentional time to slow down, to step out of the torrent of life rushing past, to be still, to be in the presence of God,

to be with those you love, to savor silence and beauty and good food and delight, to emerge refreshed.

Why Sabbath? God knew we'd burn out, lose focus, worship other gods, slight our relationships if we didn't practice Sabbath. It is one of the ways God cares for us.

Where do you experience Sabbath? Lying awake in bed on Saturday morning. Worshipping with your community of faith. Joining beloved family and friends at the dinner table to savor delectable food and the even more delicious time together. Perhaps it is on a tranquil lakeshore as dawn evaporates the mist. Or, perhaps you light a candle and curl up on the couch to read and ponder and pray a verse of scripture together.

God was thinking of you. Won't you open your life to receive God's gift of Sabbath?

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

By its very nature, Sabbath is a practice of the Four Keys for Nurturing Faith.

1. CARING CONVERSATIONS – Use Sabbath time to be really present with one another, listen deeply, share your deepest dreams and joys and concerns.
2. FAMILY DEVOTIONS – Spend intentional, focused time with God as a family, naming the people, places and experiences that have been the face of Jesus in your lives. Read scripture together. Collect prayer requests from one another.
3. RITUALS AND TRADITIONS – Sabbath is drenched with rituals – candles, eating together, a walk in the beauty of God's creation, a restoring nap. All of these remind you that you are on holy ground.
4. FAMILY SERVICE – Plan together the ways you will serve God's family and its needs after you are refreshed. Thank one another for the loving acts of service you have done for one another.

Treat your family to a resource to help you get started. (I am absolutely smitten with Wayne Mueller's book on Sabbath. It is gentle, inviting, sharing stories of how others have found God's refreshment in Sabbath and a wide variety of Sabbath practices to braid into everyday life. This is a wonderful way to prime the pump of Sabbath.)

