

# **Sabbath and Stewardship**

*by Adrienne Scrima*

Whether we are in school, raising a family, in the midst of our career or balancing a combination of these, we have been given many opportunities for stewardship.

For those unfamiliar with church speak, or who haven't had the jargon explained to them, stewardship means a responsibility for another's property. This makes sense when we realize that everything we have has been given to us by God. He wants us to use these gifts and do great things with them.

Time is one of those gifts. Discipline, diligence and excellence are ways in which we use his "property" to please Him. Being a good steward, though, means also doing something seemingly counter-productive with our time. We must rest.

Here is why it makes sense to take a weekly Sabbath:

## **God Commands It**

In the Ten Commandments, God clearly states that we are to take a Sabbath. We don't take lightly the other Commandments, which include instruction against theft, murder and adultery. Why ignore this one? Perhaps this is because the consequences aren't obvious. For many of us, it seems to be a better choice not to take a Sabbath. Think of all the work that can be done in a day! Yet, a Sabbath is for our own good.

Jesus said that the Sabbath was created for man, not man for the Sabbath. Consider the Sabbath a gift. We were offered a time to rest, recharge and worship God. We are offered this gift of rest, but we usually refuse it.

## **Rest Transforms Work**

Taking a Sabbath is a discipline, not a habit. The Sabbath rarely conveniently lands on a day when you won't have work to do. Resting means an intentional effort throughout the week to get everything done before the Sabbath.

Because of my discipline, I've become a lot more productive throughout the week. Each week, I feel like I've earned my day of rest. Oddly enough, on the Sabbath, I actually crave doing work. It causes me to look forward to doing work once again.

## **Rest Transforms Leisure**

It's important to distinguish between procrastination and a Sabbath. There's a difference between saying "I didn't do anything today, so today will be my Sabbath" and intentionally taking a day off. Without intentionality, thoughts of the unfinished work will put a damper on the day. Knowing you haven't been productive usually leads to feelings of shame and self-frustration, rather than rest. A Sabbath should dispel those thoughts.

Yes, the work still has to be done. This time, though, you are actively choosing to ignore it. There's so much freedom in the ability to enjoy a day without thinking of work. You can freely enjoy devotion time, a nap, a long conversation with friends or time spent doing a creative activity like painting.

### **Rest Prevents Burnout**

My most pertinent example to share is my experience as a student. My first semester of freshman year, I enjoyed a weekly Sabbath. My second semester, my discipline became sloppy. I had two jobs, track practice, sorority functions, organization meetings and more difficult schoolwork. I stopped taking a Sabbath and became physically and mentally burned out. And I credit this to two things: First, I wasn't resting. I had no chance to take a step back, reflect or breathe. Second, I had too much on my plate. Simply put: if you are doing too much to take a Sabbath, you are doing too much.

### **Sabbaths Require Trust in God**

Just as we tithe our money, God requires that we tithe our time. As mentioned earlier, our time is actually a gift from Him. He asks for one day of the week. It may seem like too much, but that's where the trust in God plays in. We have to trust Him that work that has to get done will get done. A Sabbath discipline means that we have prioritized our wellbeing and time with God over our work.

### **God Knows Us Better Than We Know Ourselves**

God designed the Sabbath for a reason. He created us humans with the desire to work, be creative and produce. God knew the toll it would take on us. Work can be exhausting and a distraction from God. Oftentimes, we slip in our spiritual life because "we're too busy." As our Creator, He knows that we are created for Him. Time spent resting and with Him is as valuable as the six days spent working.

Will you accept God's gift to you? Will you take a Sabbath?

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### **Prayer:**

Dear God, the God who designed a Sabbath for a reason,

We praise you for knowing us better than we know ourselves. We give thanks that you extended the invitation to Sabbath, knowing we would often find ourselves exhausted from work. Help us to recognize your loving gift of Sabbath and to use this gift wisely. You have given us the great and wonderful responsibility to rest. May we use this gift to honor you and be better stewards in this world.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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**Questions:**

1. Do you treat time as your own, or as a gift from God?
2. Why do you think Sabbath is often not taken as seriously as the other Ten Commandments?
3. Do you sometimes feel like you have too much to do to take a Sabbath? Is this because you're not using your time efficiently, have too much on your plate, or a combination of the two?