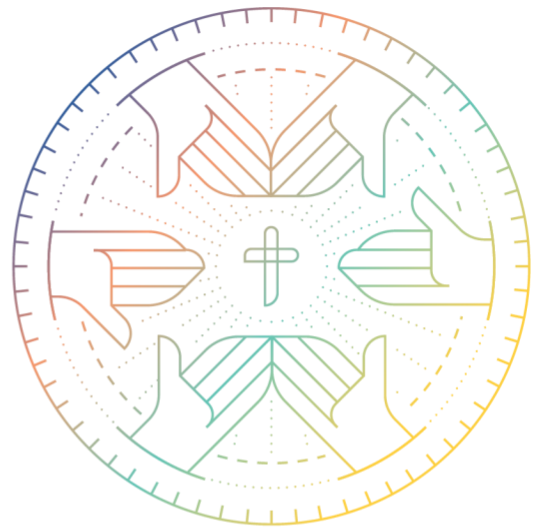


# Group Life.

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER



## WELCOME (10 MINUTES)

This week we are wrapping up our series, *Give Me Strength*. In this final week, we'll talk about how sabbath rest is important for our transformation and how there are small, unhurried spiritual practices that slow us down and make space for our souls to rest in God.

- Please don't forget to take attendance via the attendance reminder email. It's important!

## ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

Sabbath provides the time and space to love well. Get-togethers, parties, holidays, special achievements...we celebrate God's goodness to us and those we love! What is a celebration you remember? How did your family celebrate birthdays as a child?

[Host Guidance: People have different ways of celebrating and those celebrations often become our fondest memories. Ask each person to share a fond memory of celebration. If someone has none, then simply acknowledge that "that must be very hard for you. I'm sorry." This icebreaker is just a way to get to know more about the people in your circle of community.]

## INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

Was there one idea that stood out to you from Pastor Paul's message on the importance of Sabbath rest?

### Read Ephesians 5:1-2

There's perhaps an infinite number of ways we can imitate God. Or, perhaps not. Brainstorm with your group all the things about God that can, and should, imitate.

[Host Guidance: We can imitate all of God's attributes like love, holiness, grace, truth, etc. We can imitate his actions toward people, such as forgiving the woman caught in adultery or making a friendship with a tax collector. We can also imitate his habits, such as observing the Sabbath or getting away early in the morning for prayer to the Father. Just have fun with it!]

## INTO THE WORD (25 MINUTES)

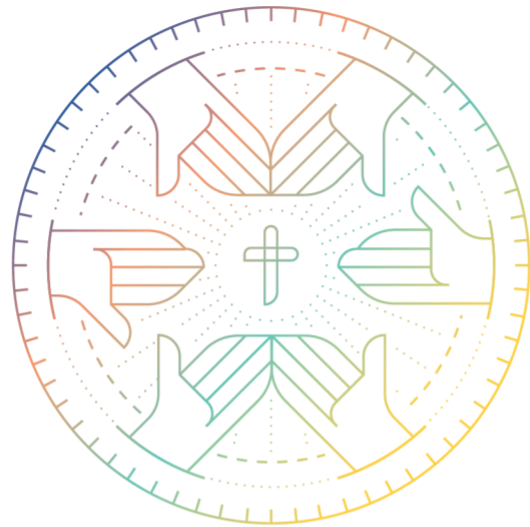
### Read Matthew 11:28-30.

What do you think of when you hear the words "rest for your souls"? What is God referring to? What kind of rest? What things do we struggle with for which God would offer us rest?

[Host Guidance: People need rest from all kinds of things: shame and guilt, mistakes, self-hatred, bitterness, unbelief, temptation, wandering, scorn, etc. It would be helpful to also mention what God offers us that leads us to rest, e.g. we are ashamed of some past bad choice and we carry

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that guilt around with us. God offers us forgiveness, a clean slate, hope for the future and a promise he will always be with us to guide us and protect us.]

**Read Isaiah 58:13-14.** How is this passage similar to or different from Isaiah 40:28-31?

[Host Guidance. Both passages are hopeful, contain a promise, and inspire us to respond to God in the way he describes. Both describe a life that we long for. In both, the gracious, giving and blessing heart of God can be seen.]

Is the “delight in the Lord” something we do or something God does in us? What is required for us to experience this delight?

[Host Guidance. The passage would seem to indicate that if we honor the Sabbath and delight in it, God will bring delight into our lives through it, as well as other blessings.]

**Read Psalm 62:1-3, 5-8.** What might be a connection between these verses and the practice and benefit of Sabbath?

[Host Guidance. In a beautiful way, the Psalmist seems to be describing a Sabbath experience that happens at a soul level, includes silence, waiting for God, being attentive to Him, praising Him, trusting Him and finding refuge in Him. Wouldn't it be awesome if that could happen for us every week?]

## APPLICATION (25 MINUTES)

[Host Guidance. Don't feel pressure to cover all the questions below. Pick the one or two questions that might lead to the best conversation, but if discussion fades or time allows, include the others.]

Pastor Paul talked about Sabbath rest providing the opportunity for us to think deeply and ask ourselves questions:

- What's going right in my life?
- What's going wrong in my life?
- What's confusing to me?
- What's missing?
- What needs to change?

What other introspective questions would be helpful? How might taking an inventory like this on a regular basis make a difference for us as we follow Christ day-by-day?

Paul talked about cultural traps that keep us from considering what it would like to unwrap a Sabbath rest. Which of the following traps do you identify with and what's a way Sabbath can help you escape it?

- “Busy is better” trap. (Heaven help us that we’d ever sit quietly, ever risk being still, doing nothing, just being loved by God.)
- “So much to do” trap (Meaning the universe, the house, the kids or the job, will cease to exist if I don’t get busy.)
- “If I don’t, I won’t” trap. (Meaning I don’t trust myself to be responsible and get to the things I need to eventually do, so I have to do them now.)
- “My children will miss out” trap. (Which is so pervasive today, and leads so many families to the brink of exhaustion.)

What is your practice or experience with keeping a Sabbath? If a part of your family of origin, is it a fond memory?

What’s one small change in your lifestyle that could allow you to enter into a Sabbath experience, and what would you do differently in the Sabbath than the other six days of the week?

### **PRAYER (10 MINUTES)**

*Father God, we do well to be still, to pause, and acknowledge who you are and to remind ourselves that we are yours. Help us to love you and others well. We give back to you our time, our attention, our trust and our hearts. We are grateful for your Word that equips us, your grace that sustains us and this community that strengthens us. Remind us again today that, truly, our souls find rest in You alone. Refresh us and renew us by the power of your Holy Spirit and for your glory. All because of Jesus. Amen. **Amen***