



— the Chapel at Seaside —

# FROM THE TOWER

SEPTEMBER, 2023 | VOL 13 | SABBATH

## Invitation to a Sabbath Experiment

**In October, we are setting out on a journey with you, Church!**

Would you consider accepting our invitation?

We are calling it a group experiment. Why? Because that is what it is. We want to see what happens if everyone in our church **tried** a spiritual practice with the intention of drawing nearer to the Lord.

What is a spiritual practice? They are practices Jesus did and what the followers of Jesus have been doing since the time of Jesus. Look, we know not everyone is going to try this, but we know many people are curious about what it would be like to practice the spiritual rhythm of Sabbath. And if a bunch of people are sharing the experience there should be a lot to talk about, which leads to growth both spiritually and communally.

We know that many people won't *consider* trying simply because they think they will fail. Well...when is the last time you were awesome at something the first time you tried to do it? **GROWTH** is what we are after, not perfection. One of the reasons we try things is to see if they produce any fruit worth the effort. When it comes to an experiment of our spiritual life, let's start with the question, "What do you have to lose?" If there is no fruit from it, stop. If there is, keep on. Easy as that.

### **Why Start with Sabbath?**

Well, we have heard it said, *"If you don't have time to practice the sabbath, you likely won't make time to practice the other disciplines."*

### **Why Spiritual Disciplines? For Spiritual formation!**

Have you ever said, "I really have to get in shape," then took no steps to get in shape and then you were miraculously in shape?

Yeah, me neither.

You can **know** exactly what to do to eat healthy and work out, but if you are not making the space to move more and the decisions to eat healthy, you aren't really getting in shape, are you?

This is what spiritual formation is. It is saying, I want to follow Jesus...then taking the steps to follow Jesus. The process looks like this; You abide (or find your home) in Jesus by being with him, you are changed by Jesus as you become like him, and you embody the ways of Jesus as you do what he did. This is a process of never being complacent in your faith journey. ***If you aren't being formed by Jesus, you are most certainly being formed by something. What are you being formed by?***

**October is coming and when it gets here, we want you to be ready. So read on to know what to expect, how to join in, and where you can find additional resources.**

## What Sabbath Is NOT

Sabbath, or any spiritual discipline, is **not** a legalistic expectation. It is not something that saves you or even makes you righteous. It is not a ticket to heaven or a means to salvation. The Sabbath is not commanded in the New Testament, but we believe Jesus practiced it. We would never claim that you have to practice the sabbath to be holy or experience salvation.

## What Sabbath Is

We believe all spiritual practices are an invitation to something deeper. Spiritual Disciplines are tools to help us live in purposed rhythm with the ways of Jesus. John MacArthur said, "True spirituality does not consist merely of keeping external rules, but of having an inner relationship with Jesus Christ." We could not agree more. The question we have to answer is, how do we develop the inner relationship? That is what spiritual practices are for. Spiritual practices are the the space makers, time makers and tools that allow you to develop the inner relationship with Jesus.

**When is the last time you became best friends with someone on a deep level that you only heard someone else talk about once a week?**

It has been said salvation is not about what you do, it's about what has been done for you. When we are talking about practices, we are not talking about salvation, we are simply talking about what happens next and for the rest of your life!

Jesus told us to *do* all sorts of things, starting with "Come and See" and "Follow Me". The grace has been given, but your journey is every day of your life, Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" This is pro-active. This is something that you do, **and** that God does for you. The spiritual practices are not the end, but they are the tools to help us on the journey. God will meet you as you make space to sit with Him and meet Him, He will not turn off your tv, or put down your phone for you. He asks you to do the work of pulling up the chair to the table at which He is sitting.

The scriptures state that we are created in the image of God. Thus, our true identity isn't found in our job or accomplishments, it's found in God. When the Hebrew people were slaves in the Egyptian Empire, it was easy to default to identity or value being found in what they could do. God's call for them to sabbath was to teach them to rest and trust in Him. It shattered generations of distorted reality and called for them to kingdom reality. Sabbath is resistance against the ways of empire and allegiance to the Kingdom of God. Every week, I have great hesitations about stopping my work for 24 hours. I think, "what will people think if they know I take time off? What if there is more work to be done? I can't stop because I think I keep this ship sailing and I need people to trust and follow me." That way of thinking doesn't make me a great martyr, it makes me posture as a false god who lives with an empire mentality. I falsely assume it all depends on me and what I do is most important. Sabbath reorients us to trust in the one who created the heavens and the earth, to be reminded our identity is always found fully in him, and we should celebrate what God has done for us. We too have operated for generations in a distorted reality finding identity in what we could accomplish. Sabbath shatters those ways and leads us back to Jesus. Trust and follow the Lord of Sabbath, rest in him and his work, and experience the Kingdom of God.

## What Do We Know?

We, Andrew and Sarah, have been in full time ministry together for almost 2 decades. We have heard about and read about spiritual disciplines since year 1. We both read "Celebration of Discipline" By Richard Foster in our first year of marriage and it caused us to try something other than waking up and having a quiet time, praying, and then going on with the day. The disciplines (or practices) are efforts to form us into Christ's likeness as Christ followers. We weren't new to knowing about spiritual practices, we just only gave heed to a few of them. It wasn't until one year ago that we ever even tried to have a sabbath. Some preachers we know and have been listening to for years created some free resources to better help people journey through the practices of Jesus, they called it *Practicing The Way*. We asked 5 other dedicated people to walk through the 4 week curriculum with us. Our hope was to better understand the sabbath and to see what it might mean for our lives. It is one year later and we are still practicing it. It is our favorite day of the week and it has changed how we function. **We want you to know that we would never ask you to do something we aren't already doing.** Mostly, we want you to know that if you have any questions about it, we would love to talk about how it looks for our family.

Since we have already said, this is not a legalistic perfectly formed practice, it will look different for you than it does for us. The point is always the same; we stop trying and working, we rest in the goodness of God and we delight in all God has blessed us with and what we have worked so hard for. We commune with people who bring us life. We worship our God and King.

It turns out a day where we stop all the other hustle in life to rest, delight, and worship, changes every other day of the week.

## How to Participate

**Step 1.** Each Sunday in October, Andrew will be teaching on a different aspect of the Sabbath. You can join us for worship, tune in online, or listen to the podcast.

**Step 2.** Our friends at **Practicing the Way** have developed amazing curriculum to teach us and guide us through our journey. Just click the "click here" button to join. You will now have access to each week's extra video teaching and a plethora of other resources like podcasts, free downloads and such. Go explore the site.

**Step 3.**

**If you are a part of a home group**, we are asking for your group to meet each week in October to watch the video and discuss the questions and how your sabbath journey is going. If you cannot make it, you can still watch the videos and try it, you will have friends to discuss it with.

**If you are not part of a home group** and want to take the journey here are two suggestions. You can absolutely do this in whatever town you are in. You have all the resources. We STRONGLY suggest you invite at least one friend into the journey - send them the link and ask them to join the group and get access to the content and then make a plan to try sabbath and then set a time to meet to walk the course together and talk about how it is going.

If you are not part of a home group and would like to join one, let

**Sarah@thechapelatseaside.com** know.



click  
here!

## All the resources

There are so many resources for learning about the sabbath. You can access many of them by joining our journey with that [round "click here" button](#) in the **How to Participate** section. You can also read about some of them on this page, or you can find all of this information living on our website at [Thechapelatseaside.com/sabbath](http://Thechapelatseaside.com/sabbath)

**THE FIRST THING YOU SHOULD DO IS DOWNLOAD (OR PURCHASE) The Sabbath Guide**  
**It is a handy workbook with all kinds of info you will return to as you are figuring out what sabbath looks like for you.**

Sabbath Guide Book - [to purchase a hard copy, click here.](#)

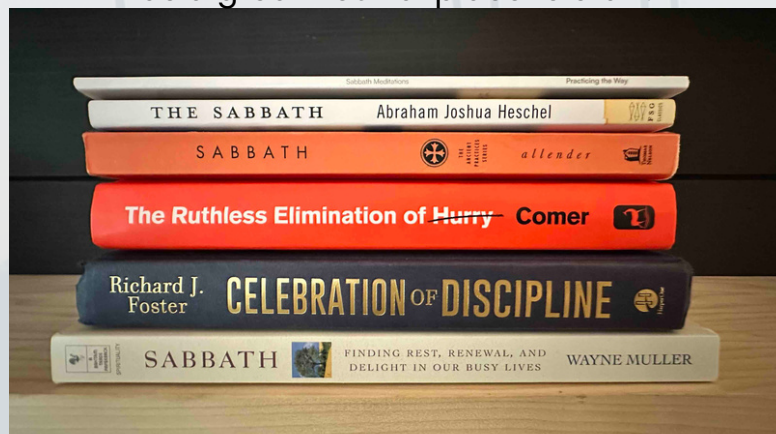
Sabbath Guide Book - [Download a free digital copy here.](#)

### **Rule of Life Podcast Listen to episodes 1-4. One for each week**

Our friends at Practicing the Way make amazing resources and offer them to us for free. One of the tools I really appreciate is the podcast. After you watch the video for your week with your group, listen to the coordinating podcast to gain deeper understanding and practical application for what you heard on the video.



While there are many, many books on Sabbath - here are a few we recommend if you are wanting to go a little deeper. Practicing the Way recommends **Sabbath by Dan Allendar** as a great neutral place to start.



[Sabbath Meditations](#) - free digital download here., [The Sabbath](#) - Abraham Joshua Heschel, [Sabbath](#) - Dan Allendar, [The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry](#) - John Mark Comer, [Celebration of Discipline](#) - Richard Foster, [Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives](#) by Wayne Muller

## Don't take our word for it

When we first started our Sabbath practice, we were somewhat skeptical and resistant. We were busy with work and parenting two toddlers – would we really be able to take a true Sabbath? Almost a year later, our family has made Sabbath practice a regular part of our weekly rhythm.

For us, Sabbath starts at sundown on Friday night. We do family dinner, put the boys in bed, and then Preston and I spend time in prayer together before we have an at-home date night. On Saturday morning, we get up early and head to Ed Walline. Preston is a part-time lifeguard for SWFD and Saturday morning is a training day. While he trains with the other lifeguards, the boys and I spend time on the beach. The lifeguard community is one we deeply value and going to lifeguard training as a family is a life-giving part of our Sabbath. The rest of the day usually entails family lunch, naps, and time outside in Creation, biking, going to the beach, or walking through the forest. Our only strict Sabbath-rule is no checking on work (which would have been an unthinkable concept a year ago). The focus of our Sabbath is resting in God's goodness.

Sabbath has had a huge impact on how we live our lives. The practice of Sabbath has taught us:

- Reorientation: Sabbath reminds us that we're not indispensable; the world doesn't cease in our inactivity. Sabbath channels our hearts to depend more on God and less on ourselves and teaches us that our self-worth doesn't depend on our accomplishments, but rather, who we are as God's children.
- Community: It has drawn us closer to others who are intentional about their Sabbath.
- Mindset Shift: Our Sabbath observance has recalibrated our weekly rhythm, instilling a slower pace even on non-Sabbath days.
- Acceptance: Embracing the fact that we can't achieve everything in a week, Sabbath underscores the beauty of rest and contentment.

A year in, we're beginning to understand that Sabbath is a gift from God for us, not a commandment to follow, but a gift of rest that our Creator knows we need.

- The Williams Family

If you are still asking the question, "Why should I try this?" here is a free chapter from the book *Garden City* by John Mark Comer you may find helpful.

[Click Here](#)