

Spiritual Exercises for Sabbath (from *the Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun)

1. Plan a twenty-four-hour sabbath you can enter with anticipation. The night before your sabbath, remind your body how long it has to luxuriate and rest in God. Consider the things that would nourish you: worship, a nap, making love, walking, reading, playing with children, afternoon tea. Plan them spaciouly into the day.
2. Gather your family together to discuss how to arrange your sabbath for refreshment, renewal and relationships. Ask “How do you intentionally leave the school- and work-week behind? Let everyone tell one thing they love to do on Sunday (or whichever day you sabbath).How can you approach sabbaths in ways that do not force, rush or demand?”
3. Begin your sabbath gently on Saturday evening. Light a candle. Invite the presence of Christ to guide you through your sabbath. Eat with friends and family. Go to bed early, speaking peace to one another. Pray for Christ to give you deep, refreshing sleep. Rest in his arms. Commit your dreams to the Lord.
4. Prepare a “sabbath box or basket.” Choose a basket or cover a grocery-size box with gift paper. Each Saturday evening, gather as a family to put all the things you don’t need to take with you into Sunday. Drop cell phones, credit cards and pagers into the box. Put work projects and homework in the box. Tell one another what you are looking forward to as you enter Sunday. Pray together to receive the gift of sabbath.
5. The night before your sabbath day, enter into sleep as a spiritual act of worship. Consciously let go of your compulsion to be indispensable. Drop all that brings anxiety into the arms of your heavenly Father. Lay your head on the pillow imagining that you are putting your head into the lap of God. Commit your body and dreams to him. Relax in God and rest.
6. Awake gently to your sabbath day. If it is possible, don’t set an alarm. Let your body wake naturally. As you come to consciousness, take several deep breaths and open your body wide to God for the new day. Stretch out and feel the full length of yourself. Thank God that you are fearfully and wonderfully made. Thank him for the gift of the day before you. Is God speaking to you in any way? Listen and respond. Get up slowly and attend to your desire to encounter God today.

Resources on Sabbath

Sabbath by Wayne Muller

Sabbath Keeping by Lynne M. Baab

Sabbath as Resistance by Walter Brueggemann

The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry by John Mark Comer