



Session 6: Discover the Rhythms of the Daily Office and Sabbath

Introduction

Be open to yourself, to God, and to the people in your group. It is ok if you feel a little bit uncomfortable. Just know you are invited to be as vulnerable as you would like to be.

As a group let's remind ourselves of these guidelines:

1. Speak only for yourself, use "I" statements
2. Keep your sharing to 2-3 minutes, give room for others to share
3. No fixing, saving, or setting other people straight
4. Trust and learn from silence, there is no pressure to share
5. Observe confidentiality

Many of us are eager to develop our relationship with God. The problem, however, is that we can't seem to stop long enough to be with him. And if we aren't busy, we feel guilty that we are wasting time and not being productive. It is like being addicted, not to drugs or alcohol, but to tasks, work, and doing.

But God is offering us a way to deeply root our lives in him. This can be found in two ancient disciplines going back thousands of years, the Daily Office and Sabbath. When placed inside present-day Christianity, the Daily Office and Sabbath are groundbreaking, countercultural acts that go against the grain of our fast-paced Western culture. Stopping for the Daily Office and Sabbath is not meant to add another "to-do" to our already busy schedules. It is the resetting of our entire lives toward a new destination, God himself.

For starters

The focus of the Daily Office is not about getting something from God, but being with God in the morning, at noon, evening, and bedtime. The Daily Office includes stopping, centering oneself, silence, and Scripture. The Daily Office is a way to slow down our busy lives.

- 1) How busy are you? Place an X on the scale below.

Not busy at all |-----| *Extremely busy*

Where would you like to be on this scale?

Scripture: Daniel 6:6-10

After being forcibly removed from his country and home, Daniel was given a prestigious education and high-level job in government. The pressure on him to conform to the worldly, pagan values of Babylon was great. The following example gives us insight into one of the secrets of his faithful devotion to God.

6 Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! 7 All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. 8 Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." 9 Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

10 When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.

1. What stands out to you in verse 10 about Daniel's response to the decree from the King?
2. How do you think this practice anchored Daniel in God and enabled him to resist the great pressure he was facing?
3. What are the greatest obstacles preventing you from stopping to be with God one or twice a day?
4. When you stop to pray what do you say? Pastor Brian teaches a morning liturgy of prayer which includes among other things:
 - a. The Jesus Prayer: *Lord Jesus Christ Son of God have mercy on me.*
 - b. The Psalm for the day
 - c. The Lord's Prayer
 - d. The Prayer for the Week

If you pray the morning prayer liturgy, what has that experience been like?

If you pray any of the four prayers mention above, describe your experience.

What other things do you say in prayer?

5. What do you find most challenging about prayer?

Scripture: Exodus 20:8-11

God gave his people ten commandments to form them into a worshipping and just society where they would be people who loved God and loved neighbor. The fourth commandment focuses on loving God.

8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

1. Biblical Sabbaths are a 24-hour block of time each week with four characteristics:
 - a. **Stop:** To “stop” is built into the literal meaning of the Hebrew word. We have limits. God is on the throne running the world. We are called to let go and trust him.
 - b. **Rest:** Once we stop, we are called to rest from our work and our “doings”
 - c. **Delight:** We are to slow down so we can enjoy what we have been given.
 - d. **Contemplate:** We seek to see the invisible in the visible, to recognize the hidden ways the miracle of life is all around us in his gifts to us.

What 24-hour period might work for you at this phase of your journey to practice Sabbath?

2. What do you need to stop that relates to your work, paid and unpaid?
3. What activities, places, and/or people create rest and delight for you?