

## Young Adult Sabbath Retreat Closing Session

When we began, we started by talking about Sabbath, what it is, what it isn't. In reconnecting with God, Sabbath can take many forms and mean different things to different people. Over the course of your time here, how has the definition of Sabbath changed for you? If so, what is different? Turn to the person next to you and share how your view of Sabbath has changed since you have arrived here.

Psalm 46:10 reads, "Be still, and know that I am God!" This time has hopefully been an opportunity for you to come away from the cacophony of your life and enter into the stillness of God's presence. Perhaps you have had an opportunity to think about what God is calling you to do next in your life. Perhaps you have pondered things that you might give up or take on in order to be closer to God. Maybe you've been planning the next time you can take a Sabbath moment. There are choices you can make to help Sabbath become a lifestyle rather than something you know you should do but can't seem to find the time to do it. When you are able to connect with God, you are able to tend to other parts of your life and your relationships more fully.

It's hard to come down off of the mountain and it's shocking to realize how much our bodies, minds and spirits crave Sabbath. Your mind might already be thinking of the things that will beckon your attention when you leave this place. Some responsibilities are more important than others. In what ways can you begin to shift those priorities in order for you to have Sabbath time on a regular basis?

### Too Busy to Rest?

(taken from *Sabbath Keeping: Finding freedom in the Rhythms of Rest* by Lynne M. Baab, Intervarsity Press, 2005, page 89-90.)

*Busy. Exhausted. Empty. If you ask people how they are doing, the most common answer is "busy." If you ask a few more questions about how they are feeling, you will usually bump up against exhaustion. If you persevere in asking about what is going on inside, you may well find out that many people feel empty.*

*Constant activity hasn't satisfied us at the deepest level, yet we continue to race around, somehow believing that a fast pace will bring us health and life. Ironically, the very symptoms that indicate our need for a Sabbath are also the forces that keep us from attempting to set aside a day for rest. Many people feel they are just too busy to take time for rest.*

*Most veteran Sabbath observers... have found they get more done over the course of a week by resting one day. But most would also say that they would joyfully continue to keep a Sabbath even if they got less done each week. The blessings resulting from a Sabbath go much deeper than overall productivity.*

Sabbath can be taken at a moment every day, at a particular time during the week, a few times a month or even a few times a year. Sabbath can be defined as a setting aside, of things, tasks, chores. It can also be defined as a taking up of prayer, spiritual disciplines, silence, or rest.

It is important to remember that while sticking to a Sabbath routine can be difficult at first, the more you make it a habit, the easier it will become. And if at first you try something that feels awkward or uncomfortable, stick with it for a while, in order to give the practice a fair chance. Then you can decide whether or not it is helping you reconnect with God.

What will you do?

It's easy to make a plan for maintaining Sabbath to return home and two weeks later the plan has been swallowed up by appointments, fatigue and busyness. And while honoring the Sabbath in your life shouldn't be something else on your "To Do" list or something that causes more stress, it should not be ignored. Here are some ideas for helping to keep yourself accountable to honoring Sabbath in your life.

- Start slowly – perhaps you recognize Sabbath once every few months. If at first it seems awkward or impossible, as you take more Sabbath time for yourself, it will get easier and easier to gather with God.
- Mark it on your calendar – in PEN and truly take the time away. If you see this as a commitment or an appointment with God that you have to keep, it makes it harder to fill in that time with other things.
- Create a space in your home that can serve as a Sabbath room or corner or even a closet. Surround yourself with candles, relaxing music, scriptures or other readings. Make it a place where you can spend a few uninterrupted minutes or hours tending your relationship with God.
- Remember Sabbath is always a “work in progress” – the goal is not to attain perfect Sabbath habits, rather, the goal is to reconnect with God throughout your life.
- Find a Sabbath partner – sometimes it helps to have someone to keep you accountable for taking Sabbath time. You could even form a small group and pray for one another as you each strive to reunite with God.

*End this time by having everyone take a few moments to write down one or two Sabbath practices they will incorporate into their lives in the next couple of weeks. Then have a closing prayer dedicating the people and their renewed commitments to Sabbath into God's hands.*