Creating Sabbath Space in Our Lives

Ron Rolheiser, OMI
A Video Retreat Experience

Leader’s Guide ........................................ Pages 2-16

Participant Materials
Session 1 ........................................ Pages 17-22
Session 2 ........................................ Pages 23-26
Session 3 ........................................ Pages 27-31
Session 4 ........................................ Pages 32-35
Session 5 ........................................ Pages 36-39
Welcome
Welcome to a unique experience. Creating Sabbath Space in Our Lives is a complete program that offers numerous possibilities for personal and spiritual enrichment, guided by one of the most sought-after retreat directors of our time.

Presented originally as a three-day event at King’s House Retreat and Renewal Center, Belleville, IL, in July 2008, this retreat has been replicated as a ten-session video program that can be used for parish adult faith formation, small group faith sharing groups, or for private spiritual renewal.

As the program leader, you can determine the schedule and pace of the retreat experience to suit the particular needs of your community or group. The materials you will need to augment the video discs are included in this Leader’s Guide, along with suggestions for group process that you can tailor to your needs.

Resources
The Leader’s Guide materials include
- A “Prepare” page for each of the ten sessions
- A “Prayer” service page for each of the five topics
- A “Reflection” vehicle for each of the five topics
- A “Notes on Screen” section that includes all the quotations that appear on the screen during the presentations.

These materials are designed to be reproduced by you for your groups and individuals with whom you share this program.

The Prepare pages are meant to help the participants focus attention on their own lives as preparation for the sessions. The questions are usually personal, and responses are meant to be shared with the group on a volunteer basis. Prepare pages might be distributed to participants immediately before showing the video presentation, or at the conclusion of the previous presentation to allow for more time for reflection.

The Prayer service pages follow a set format that includes Scripture readings, reflection, petitions, and an invocation. It is suggested that, as the program continues, participants be encouraged to bring prayer resources to share with the group to begin or conclude the sessions.

The Reflection vehicles are meant as opportunities for the participants to review in their minds the contents of the presentations and apply them to their daily lives. They should be distributed following sessions 1B, 2B, 3B, 4B, and 5B, and shared with the group on a volunteer basis.
Guidelines for Discussion Groups

This retreat program is best carried out in a relaxed and informal setting. The video screen should be set up so that it is visible to all, even though they may not be arranged in a “classroom” style space. The leader can set the tone by offering refreshments at the start of the session, and by making sure that everyone has had a chance to introduce him or herself.

If you plan to begin the first session with “Prepare 1A”, allow for about fifteen to twenty minutes for participants to fill in the page, and then ask for any comments that they may wish to express. Mention that comments on these pages are strictly voluntary.

After you have shown the video portion of the session, ask volunteers to mention any particular parts of the presentation that were of interest to them. Ask participants to mention aspects of the presentation that struck a chord with them and aspects that they thought might not apply in their situation.

Ask for volunteers to read the Scripture passages for the Prayer service. You might want to do this early in the session to give the volunteers time to locate and read over the passages in their Bibles.

Reflection on the Scripture is a key aspect of the retreat program, and you should be prepared to direct this part of the session, since many participants may be hesitant to comment on Scripture. The purpose is to connect the overall point of the session with the application of the Scripture.

Keep in mind the following pointers for successful discussion group leadership.

- If you open the sharing with your own thoughts or experiences, you will model the kind of responses that the program encourages.
- Not everyone needs to share in every session. Some participants will need time to feel comfortable in the group.
- Make it clear that whatever is shared in the group is considered confidential.
- Periods of silence should not be uncomfortable. People need time to think.
- Begin and end on time.
- Ask that everyone have a chance to speak once, before anyone speaks twice.
- Sharing should not be considered problem solving or advising others.
- Hospitality is the order of the day.
Notes on Screen

Session 1A  Sabbath AS the First Retreat
First Retreat: The Lonely Place
Second Retreat: The Desert
The Sabbath
Sabbath is meant to be un-ordinary time
Sabbath is meant to be celebration time
Sabbath is meant to be reconciliation time
“Sometimes you catch yourself doing what you should have been doing all the time: just sitting in the sun and loving.”

Session 1B  Sabbath AS the First Retreat
“Nothing so much approximates the language of God as does silence.”
  -Master Eckhart

“To allow one's self to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns; to surrender to too many demands; to commit one's self to too many projects; to want to help everyone and everything, is to succumb to violence. Life becomes a maelstrom in which speed and accomplishment, consumption and productivity have become the most valued human commodities. In this trance of over-work, we take everything for granted. We consume things, people, and information. We do not have time to savor this life, nor to deeply and gently care for ourselves, our loved ones, our world. Rather, with increasingly dizzying haste, we use them up and throw them away.”
  -Wayne Muller

“Sabbath honors the wisdom of dormancy. If certain plant species, for example, do not lie dormant for winter, they will not bear fruit in spring. A period of rest in which nutrition and fertility most readily come together is not simply a human psychological convenience, it's a spiritual and a biological necessity. A lack of dormancy produces confusion and erosion in the life force. We, too, must have periods in which we lie fallow and restore our souls.”
  - Wayne Muller
"Sabbath need not be a year or even a day. Sabbath may also be a Sabbath afternoon; a Sabbath hour; a Sabbath walk. Sabbath is time off the wheel, when we take our hand from the plow and let God and the earth care for things while we drink, if only for a few minutes, from the fountain of rest and delight."

-Wayne Muller

"Everyday give yourself something that day to look forward to."

"Sabbath is more than the absence of work. It's not just the day off when we catch up on television or our errands. It's the presence of something that arises when we consecrate a period of time to listen to what is most beautiful, nurturing or true. It is time consecrated with our attention, our mindfulness, honoring the quiet forces of grace and spirit that sustain and heal us." -Wayne Muller

"Traditionally, Sabbath is honored by lighting candles; by gathering and worship in prayer; by blessing children; by singing songs; by keeping silence; by walking; reading Scripture; making love; sharing a meal. Just as we wait until darkness falls before we can see the stars, so does Sabbath quietly wait for us."

-Wayne Muller

"What I want to do is to leap out of this personality, and then to sit apart from that leaping. For I have lived too long where I can be reached."

-Rumi

"We are all going to end up with partial attention deficit disorder."

-Thomas Friedman

"On Sabbatical we say, ‘Today I am going to pamper my soul.’"

-Wayne Muller

"If we forget to rest, we will work too hard and forget our more tender mercies; forget those we love; forget our children and our natural wonder. So God gave us a commandment to observe the Sabbath: remember to rest. This is not a life-style suggestion, but a commandment, as important as not stealing, not murdering, not lying."

-Wayne Muller

"The commandment to remember to keep holy the Sabbath day is a loving reminder to take full advantage of a condition that already exists. At rest our souls are restored. This is the only commandment that begins with the word remember - as if it refers to something we have already forgotten."
"Sabbath is a time when we retreat from the illusion of our own indispensability."

-Wayne Muller
Session 2A Obstacles to Sabbath

"If I had to live my life over again, I would make more mistakes the next time. And I would relax more. I would limber up, and I would be sillier than I was this time.

I know of few things I would take as seriously; although I would take more trips; I would climb more mountains; swim more rivers; watch more sunsets; and do more walking and more looking. And I would eat more ice cream and less beans. And I would have more actual troubles and fewer imaginary ones.

You see, I have been one of those people who have lived so sensibly and sanely and hurriedly, hour after hour, day after day. Now, I've had my moments, but if I had my life to live over again, I would try to have nothing else - just moments - one after another, instead of living so many years ahead of each day.

I have been one of those people who never went anywhere without a thermometer, a hot water bottle, a gargle, a raincoat, an aspirin and a parachute.

If I could live again, I would go to more places, do more things, but I would travel lighter.
If I had my life to live again, I would start barefooted earlier in spring and stay that way later into the fall. I would play hooky from work more and I would ride more merry-go-rounds and I would pick more daisies."

- Brother Jeremiah

Obstacle To Sabbath:

Our Muddied, Wearied, Overtaxed Consciousness
Narcissism, Pragmatism and Pathological Restlessness

"I think - therefore I am."
-Rene Descartes

"Late have I loved thee: oh, beauty, ever ancient, ever new. I was outside of myself pursuing you. You were inside of me, but I wasn't inside of me."
-Saint Augustine
NOTE: The Passage from Etty Hillesum appears as the Reflection for this session.
Session 2B  Obstacles to Sabbath
Pragmatism

"Truth is what works."
- John Dewey

"Western culture, right now, constitutes a virtual conspiracy against inferiority."

Excessive Restlessness

"We aren’t rest-filled people who occasionally become restless. We are restless people who sometimes find rest."
-Henri Nouwen

"At the supper, knowing He had come from God, and knowing He was going back to God, and that, therefore, all things were possible for Him, Jesus got up from the table, took off His outer garment, and wearing only His inner garment, began to wash the disciple’s feet much to their protests."

"At the Last Supper, knowing He had come from God, and knowing He was going back to God, He got up and took off His outer garment."

Session 3A  Showing Up For the Wedding Feast and Taking the Ointment

"Southern tourists came up to visit the Dene and they were impressed with what they saw.
'Boy,' they said, 'you have a nice life. Open sky, pure air, immense lakes, gentle breezes, endless summer days, clear water, delicious fish, game in the bush, wild ducks, geese, firewood everywhere. And your way of life, sharing habits, elder’s wisdom, carefree children, friendliness towards everyone, working only when you like.

Our life in the south is hard. We’re forever worrying about timers, and laws, and fences, and regulations, and gang wars, and organized crime, and traffic jams and long hours of commuting, and mortgages and interest rates, and political games.

'Do like your way of life?' they said to the Dene.
'We don’t know,' they said. 'We’ve never had anything worse to compare it to.'"
Showing Up For The Wedding Feast And Taking The Ointment

The Invitation

"Lord, make me a good and a chaste Christian - but not yet."
-Saint Augustine

Our Busyness and Self Preoccupation

Our Innate and Inherited Guilt Complexes

"Why should my disciples fast? The bridegroom is still with them."

The Tiredness Of Non-Forgiveness and Our Perennially Protesting Our Right To Despair

**Session 3B** Showing Up For the Wedding Feast and Taking the Ointment

"Christmas is the one day where God gives you permission to be happy - take it."
-Karl Rahner

Guilt

Is it a sin not to pray?

"Let's go back to the weather. Most days you don't notice that there is any, until you fall in love, and/or sin. And then you see the clouds and you stare holes into heaven looking for Christ, when he is really at your shoulder looking for you, and in such great shape you'd never believe what he's been through.

Then, before you know how it happened, it's July or August again and you have time to do what you should have been doing all your life; sitting or walking in the grass in bare feet and loving. For God's sake, it doesn't matter how you begin, though if I had the choice I would do it all over again.

Then you're all petals once more until the storm breaks your heart, and the biggest piece goes to heaven and the hell with the weather."
Session 4A  Sabbath As Solitude and Reconciliation

One: Practice Sabbath with the discipline demanded of a commandment.

Two: Have at least one Sabbath moment every day. Give yourself something to look forward to everyday.

Three: Go somewhere everyday where you can’t be reached.

Four: Honor the wisdom of dormancy: do something regularly that is non-pragmatic.

Five: Pray and meditate in some way.

Six: Be attentive to little children, old people, family, food, wine and the weather.

Seven:
If not now, when?
If not here, where?
If not with these people, with whom?
If not for God, why?

Eight: Stay in touch with and listen to your body.

Nine: Drink a glass or two of red wine on most evenings.

The Sabbath: Solitude and Its Reconciliation

Solitude: Is not an altered state of consciousness

Solitude: Is not a false consciousness

Solitude: Is not a blank consciousness

Solitude: Is not a concentration on something lofty or holy

"Because it is enough to be. In an ordinary human mode, with one’s hunger, one’s sleep, one’s cold and warmth, rising and going to bed, putting on blankets and taking them off, making coffee, then drinking it,
defrosting the refrigerator, reading, meditating, working, praying - I live as my ancestors lived on this earth until, eventually, I die. Amen.

There is no need to make an assertion about my life, especially so about it as mine - though, doubtless, it is not somebody else's.
I must learn to live so as to forget program and artifice."
-Thomas Merton

"We live with a deep secret that we sometimes know - and then not."
-Rumi

Solitude: It's an awareness of what's in front of us.

Solitude: It's an awareness of what's deepest inside of us- our mystical center.

Mysticism: "Being touched inside of yourself by God in a way that is deeper than words, language, imagination and feeling."
-Ruth Burrows, OCD

The Center: "The brand of the first principles inside of the human person."
-Bernard Lonergan, SJ

**Session 4B  Sabbath As Solitude and Reconciliation**

Some Aids To Solitude:
Don't let restlessness drive you outward into activity, but sit with it until it turns into quiet and into solitude.

Do non-pragmatic things

Do things regularly

Prayer: either by meditation or contemplation

We need to sustain these things by ritual. Only ritual can sustain your prayer and other Sabbath disciplines. Don't exhaust yourself with creativity.

"Today you're here, and you're young and you're in love. And you think your love will sustain your marriage - but it won't. But your marriage can sustain your love."
-Dietrich Bonhoeffer
"The entire spiritual and psychological task of mid-life and beyond is to grieve and to forgive. Let go, let go, let go."

-Alice Miller
Number One: Only for today I will seek to live the lifelong day positively without wishing to solve the problems of my life all at once.

Number Two:
Only for today I will take great care of my appearance. I will dress modestly, I will not raise my voice, I will be courteous in my behavior, I will not criticize anyone and I will not claim to improve or discipline anyone except myself.

Number Three:
Only for today I will be happy in the certainty that I was created to be happy, not only in this world, but also in the next.

Number Four:
Only for today I will adapt to circumstances without requiring that all circumstances be adapted to my wishes.

Number Five:
Only for today I will devote ten minutes of time to good reading, and I will remember that just as food is necessary for the life of the body, good reading is necessary for the life of the soul.

Number Six:
Only for today I will do one good deed and not tell anyone about it.

Number Seven:
Only for today I will do at least one thing I do not like, and if my feelings are hurt, I will make sure that nobody notices.

Number Eight:
Only for today I will make a plan for myself. I might not follow it, but I will make it. And I will be on guard against two evils - hastiness and indecision.

Number Nine:
Only for today I will believe firmly, despite appearances, that the good providence of God cares for me the way nothing else cares for me.

Number Ten:
Only for today I will have no fears. And particularly, I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful and to believe in the goodness of life. Indeed, for twelve hours I can certainly do this - that which might cause me consternation were I to believe I had to do it my whole life.
Session 5A  Sabbath: The Rest In God
"Know and realize this: we weren’t made for the Sabbath, the Sabbath was made for us."
- David

"God - it's in Him that we live and move and breathe and have our being."
- Luke

Energeia
Dynamis
Exusia

God Comes Into Our World As A Redeeming Rather Than A Rescuing Power
A God Who Radiates A Different Kind Of Glory

Session 5B  Sabbath: The Rest In God
"Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will not have life within you."

"I knelt down, the most reluctant convert in the history of Christendom."
- C. S. Lewis

"But I did kneel down, because I had come to realize that the harshness of God is kinder than the softness of man, and God’s compulsion is what is our liberation."
- C. S. Lewis

To Come To Rest In God By Finding God In Both Galilee And Jerusalem.

God is Forever Going To Be Finding Us On The Roads Leading Toward Emmaus

"Friend, hope for the quest while you are alive.
Jump into experience while you are alive.
Think and think while you are alive.

What you call salvation belongs to the time before death.
If you don’t break the ropes while you are alive, do you think that ghosts will do this for you afterwards?

The idea that the soul will join to the ecstatic, just because the body is dead, all of that is a fantasy. What is found now, is found then.

If you find nothing now, after death you’ll simply end up with an apartment in the city of the dead. But if you make love with the divine, now, in the next life you will have the face of satisfied desire. So plunge into the truth. Find out who the teacher is and believe in the great sound.

When the guest is being searched for, it’s the intensity of the longing that does all the work. Look at me, and you will see a slave to that intensity.

-Kabir
### Session 1A  Prepare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consider</th>
<th>Respond</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A.</strong> What in your life now prompts you to want to take a step back—to “get away” for a time?</td>
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<td><strong>B.</strong> If you could get away for a while and take a vacation alone, where would you go; what would you do?</td>
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<td><strong>C.</strong> What distractions, responsibilities in your everyday life would you like to do without for a while?</td>
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<td><strong>D.</strong> How might you make time in your life to retreat—to get away—to take a step back—every so often, every week, every day?</td>
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### Session 1B  Prepare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consider</th>
<th>Respond</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Name the top five realities that can dominate your ordinary daily life.</td>
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<td><strong>B.</strong> Name the top five “unordinary” things you would like to have more time for.</td>
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<td><strong>C.</strong> What are the joys and sorrows of your ordinary daily life?</td>
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<td><strong>D.</strong> What might be the joys and sorrows of the unordinary you sometimes seek?</td>
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Session One  Prayer

Scripture Readings

Exodus 12:1-22
Psalm 119:25-32
Mark 2:23-28

Volunteers read the Scripture passages. After each reading, the group pauses to reflect, before beginning the next, so that participants can name phrases or ideas in the readings that struck them as particularly meaningful.

The leader encourages participants to share their reflections on the Aphorisms on Sabbath, reading several aloud to bring the content of the retreat talk to mind.

When all who wish have shared their thoughts, the leader invites the participants to mention their intentions for the progress of the group through the retreat.

To each intention, the group responds: Lord, hear our prayer.

The Leader concludes:

Jesus retreated to the desert, to quiet places, to the open waters, in order to renew his strength for God’s work. We ask your grace, Father, to turn away from our everyday concerns, so that we can seek to better know ourselves and your will for us. We ask this in the name of Christ Jesus. Amen.
### Some Aphorisms on Sabbath

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aphorism</th>
<th>My Thoughts</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything, is to succumb to violence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. “Remember the Sabbath” means “Remember that everything you have received is a blessing.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. A lack of dormancy produces confusion and erosion in the life force.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Sabbath is a time off the wheel, time when we take our hand from the plough and let God and the earth care for things.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Sabbath is a period of time to listen to what is most deeply beautiful, nourishing, or true.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. While many of us are terribly weary, we have come to associate tremendous guilt and shame with taking time to rest.</td>
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<td>7. Sabbath time is not spiritually superior to our work. The practice is rather to find that balance point at which, having rested, we do our work with greater ease and joy, and bring healing and delight to our endeavors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Sabbath is what keeps us safe and sane.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Traditionally, Sabbath is honored by lighting candles, gathering in worship and prayer, blessing children, singing songs, keeping silence, walking, reading scripture, making love, sharing a meal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Find the Sabbath rest that most fruitfully nourishes your heart and body.</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>In our world, overwork is seen as a professional virtue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>What I want is to leap out of this personality and then sit apart from that leaping. I've lived too long where I can be reached.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>When we cease our daily labor, other things—love, friendship, prayer, touch, singing, rest—can be born in the space created by our rest.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Sabbath is not something that should be seen as a downer in terms of our entry into life.</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>On sabbatical we need to say, “Today I’m going to pamper my soul.”</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>If we forget to rest we will work too hard and forget our more tender mercies, forget those we love, forget our children and our natural wonder…</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>On the Sabbath day, ancient rabbis used to teach, God created tranquility, serenity, peace, and repose. This they suggest is another kind of fertility.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
18. Our fear of silence and being alone is partially predicated on a fear that life, at its root, isn’t fundamentally good.

19. Sabbath invites us to step back and see that it is good.

20. Thomas Merton suggests that there is a “hidden wholeness” at the heart of things.

21. The commandment to “Remember the Sabbath day”... is the only commandment that begins with the word “remember,” as if it refers to something we already know but have forgotten.

22. We are always running, trying to catch things that will make us happy when, in fact, those things are trying to catch us.

23. We must have compassion for everyone, even ourselves.

24. Sabbath is a time when we retreat from the illusion of our own indispensability.

25. True freedom comes when we become “nobody special.”

26. We don’t do great things, only little things with great love. (Mother Teresa)

27. Go into your cell, and your cell will teach you everything. (Desert Fathers)

28. Let us remain as empty as possible so that God can fill us up. (Mother Teresa)

29. At our best, we become Sabbath for one another. We become space, that our loved ones, the lost and the sorrowful, may find rest in us.

30. Sometimes when we feel trapped by a problem, we must surrender to not knowing the solution and sometimes when we leave the problem alone, when we back off in unknowing, that is the space that is needed for the problem to solve itself.
### Session 2A  Prepare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consider</th>
<th>Respond</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A.</strong> What things, aside from the people you are closest to, do you consider to be your most prized possessions?</td>
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<td><strong>B.</strong> What in particular are the most unique gifts God has given you personally?</td>
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<td><strong>C.</strong> What are you most concerned about losing?</td>
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<td><strong>D.</strong> What about yourself are you most reluctant to change?</td>
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</table>
### Session 2B  Prepare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consider</th>
<th>Respond</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A.</strong> What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment in the communities in which you live and work?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B.</strong> How would you describe yourself five years from now; ten years from now?</td>
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<td><strong>C.</strong> What personal and professional goals have you not yet reached?</td>
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<td><strong>D.</strong> By what standards do you feel you are judged by others?</td>
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</table>
Session Two  

Prayer

Scripture Readings

Galatians 6:1-10

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

John 13:2b-9

Volunteers read the Scripture passages. After each reading, the group pauses to reflect, before beginning the next, so that participants can name phrases or ideas in the readings that struck them as particularly meaningful.

The leader encourages participants to share their reflections on the *Diaries of Etty Hillesum*, reading key sentences aloud to bring the content of the retreat talk to mind.

When all who wish have shared their thoughts, the leader invites the participants to mention their intentions for the progress of the group through the retreat.

To each intention, the group responds: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

The Leader concludes:

*We are called to find in our hearts the heart of Jesus, and in our minds the mind of Jesus. Help us, Father, to find first ourselves, so that we can discover Christ within.*
*We ask this in the name of Christ Jesus. Amen.*
Session Two  

Reflection

Etty Hillesum, An Interrupted Life
The Diaries of Etty Hillesum, 1941-1943

And here I have hit upon something essential. Whenever I saw a beautiful flower, what I longed to do with it was press it to my heart, or eat it all up. It was more difficult with a piece of beautiful scenery, but the feeling was the same. I was too sensual, I might almost write too greedy. I yearned physically for all I thought was beautiful, wanted to own it. Hence that painful longing that could never be satisfied, the pining for something I thought unattainable, which I called my creative urge. I believe it was this powerful emotion that made me think that I was born to create great works. It all suddenly changed, God alone knows by what inner process, but it is different now. I realized it only this morning, when I recalled my short walk round the Skating Club a few nights ago. It was dusk, soft hues in the sky, mysterious silhouettes of houses, trees alive with the light through the tracery of their branches, in short, enchanting. And then I knew how precisely I had felt in the past. Then all the beauty would have gone like a stab to my heart and I would not have known what to do with the pain. Then I would have felt the need to write, to compose verses, but the words would still have refused to come. I would have felt utterly miserable, wallowed in the pain and exhausted myself as a result. The experience would have sapped my energy. Now I know it for what it was: mental masturbation.

But that night, only just gone, I reacted quite differently. I felt that God’s world was beautiful despite everything, but its beauty now filled me with joy. I was just as deeply moved by that mysterious, still landscape in the dusk as I might have been before, but somehow I no longer wanted to own it. I went home invigorated and went to work. And the scenery stayed with me, in the background, as a cloak about my soul, to put it poetically for once, but it no longer held me back: I no longer “masturbated” with it.

My Thoughts…

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## Session 3A  Prepare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consider</th>
<th>Respond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A.</strong> What prevents you from accepting God’s invitation to lead a fuller life? What reasons do you give for not accepting God’s invitation?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B.</strong> What is the “wine”, the celebration in your life that you are sometimes too busy to enjoy?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C.</strong> What are the sources of guilt that you have experienced growing up; as an adult?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D.</strong> What things in your life do you find it difficult to forgive yourself for?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Session 3B  Prepare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consider</th>
<th>Respond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A.</strong> What people in your life do you sometimes forget to tell about how much you love and enjoy them?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B.</strong> What regrets might you have about not truly celebrating important events and people?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C.</strong> What kinds of recreation do you enjoy? What kinds of recreation would you like to try?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D.</strong> What are the greatest gifts God has given you? In what ways have you shown your appreciation for these gifts?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Session Three  Reflection

A Wedding at Cana from John Chapter 2

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."

(And) Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come."

His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you."

Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now."

Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

My Thoughts…
The King’s Wedding Feast from Matthew Chapter 22

"The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. He dispatched his servants to summon the invited guests to the feast, but they refused to come. A second time he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those invited: "Behold, I have prepared my banquet, my calves and fattened cattle are killed, and everything is ready; come to the feast."' Some ignored the invitation and went away, one to his farm, another to his business. The rest laid hold of his servants, mistreated them, and killed them.

The king was enraged and sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy to come. Go out, therefore, into the main roads and invite to the feast whomever you find.'

The servants went out into the streets and gathered all they found, bad and good alike, and the hall was filled with guests.

But when the king came in to meet the guests he saw a man there not dressed in a wedding garment. He said to him, 'My friend, how is it that you came in here without a wedding garment?' But he was reduced to silence. Then the king said to his attendants, 'Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.'

My Thoughts…
Session Three  Prayer

Scripture Readings

Song of Songs 8:5-7
1 John 4:7-16

Volunteers read the Scripture passages. After each reading, the group pauses to reflect, before beginning the next, so that participants can name phrases or ideas in the readings that struck them as particularly meaningful.

The leader encourages participants to share their reflections on the two “wedding” passages from John and Matthew, reading key sentences aloud to bring the content of the retreat talk to mind.

When all who wish have shared their thoughts, the leader invites the participants to mention their intentions for the progress of the group through the retreat.

To each intention, the group responds: Lord, hear our prayer.

The Leader concludes:

We are called to fully participate in the experiences of love that we find in the gardens of our life. Father, help us to better understand and appreciate the love that is poured out by you through your son Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We ask this in the name of Christ Jesus. Amen.
### Session 4A  Prepare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consider</th>
<th>Respond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Do you regularly plan to spend some time alone each week? In what ways does time alone refresh you?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B.</strong> What aspects in your everyday life do you feel you need to better appreciate? What do you feel that you are missing?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C.</strong> Are there times when you feel that you have betrayed your better inner self by the way you have behaved in social situations?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D.</strong> What truly important people and things in your life do you feel that you need to pay more attention to?</td>
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</table>
Session 4B  Prepare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consider</th>
<th>Respond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A.</strong> What kinds of things are you constantly restless about? What do you feel on a regular basis has been left “undone?”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B.</strong> In what ways would you like to improve your life of prayer—more frequency—more depth—more variety—more response from God?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C.</strong> What practices and habits are most important in your life? Which ones do you find easiest to abandon? Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D.</strong> Which people in your life do you find easiest to forgive? Which most difficult? Why?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Session Four    Reflection

Some Practical Hints to Keep Sabbath in Our Lives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practical Hints</th>
<th>My Thoughts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Practice the “Sabbath” with the discipline demanded of a commandment, even as you practice the discipline of life and duty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Have at least one “Sabbath moment” every day—give yourself something to look forward to every day.</td>
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<td>3. Go somewhere every day where you can’t be reached.</td>
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<td>4. Honor the “wisdom of dormancy—do something regularly that is “non-pragmatic.”</td>
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<td>5. Pray and meditate regularly in some way.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Be attentive to little children, old people, family, food, wine, and the weather.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Live by axiom: If not now, when? If not here, where? If not with these people, with whom? If not for God, why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Stay in touch, and listen to your body.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Drink a glass or two of red wine on most evenings—ideally in a rocking chair.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Don’t nurse grudges and obsessions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Session Four  Prayer

Scripture Readings

Genesis 2:1-25

Ephesians 4:17-24


Volunteers read the Scripture passages. After each reading, the group pauses to reflect, before beginning the next, so that participants can name phrases or ideas in the readings that struck them as particularly meaningful.

The leader encourages participants to share their reflections on the “Practical Hints,” reading key phrases aloud to bring the content of the retreat talk to mind.

When all who wish have shared their thoughts, the leader invites the participants to mention their intentions for the progress of the group through the retreat.

To each intention, the group responds: Lord, hear our prayer.

The Leader concludes:

We are called to put into practice what we have learned and reflected upon during our time of Sabbath retreat. Father, help us to persevere in our resolution to change our lives for the better. We ask this in the name of Christ Jesus. Amen.
Session 5A  Prepare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consider</th>
<th>Respond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A.</strong> What descriptions of power are most appropriate for your image of God?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B.</strong> What do you think is meant when people say that they are redeemed by Christ?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C.</strong> What evidence do you have that Christ is present in your life?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D.</strong> What negative experiences in your life have also been growth experiences?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Session 5B  Prepare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consider</th>
<th>Respond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A.</strong> What accomplishments, events, and relationships in your life give it meaning?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B.</strong> At what times in your life do you find that Jesus seems most alive to you?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C.</strong> What do you believe are the best opportunities to recognize Jesus in the world today?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D.</strong> Based on your retreat experience, in what ways do you plan to celebrate Sabbath in the future?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Session Five  Prayer

Scripture Readings

John 11:1-44

John 6:53-69


Volunteers read the Scripture passages. After each reading, the group pauses to reflect, before beginning the next, so that participants can name phrases or ideas in the readings that struck them as particularly meaningful.

The leader encourages participants to share their reflections on the How to Live Longer, reading key sentences aloud to bring the content of the retreat talk to mind.

When all who wish have shared their thoughts, the leader invites the participants to mention their intentions for the continuing progress of the group as they try to put into practice what they learned during the retreat.

To each intention, the group responds: Lord, hear our prayer.

The Leader concludes:

We are called to see more clearly the risen Christ in our midst, and to be more conscious of the needs of our redeemed selves. Father, we pray that you will ever sustain us in our journey toward wholeness and holiness. We ask this in the name of Christ Jesus. Amen.
## Session Four  **Reflection**

### How to Live Longer
from Dan Buettner’s Power 9 Pyramid in “The Blue Zone”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practical Hints</th>
<th>My Thoughts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Add simple activities to your day like walking farther than you need to, doing gardening or home repairs yourself, or running around with your children or pets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Try eating off smaller plates to decrease your portion sizes and reduce calories.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Limit the number of servings of meat you eat in a week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Drink a glass or two of red wine most evenings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Know your passions in life and take time to enjoy them most days.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Take quiet time to relieve stress.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Belong to a spiritual community and gather with them regularly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Make your family and your loved ones a priority. Express that through your actions.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Surround yourselves with friends who have healthy habits and support you in your goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Do these things and you could add ten years to your life.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>