I'm not the best person to listen to about sabbath keeping. Oh, sure, I wrote a dissertation about it, and led a sabbath study and experiment in my congregation. And that means I've read just about everything with sabbath in its title. What about experience? Let me tell you about experience.

For three years, when I lived near a monastery, I kept a sabbath every Thursday. I worshipped with the community, wandered around outside, ate simple meals in silence with monks and other visitors, and spent a lot of time talking to nobody but God. Nothing else has so profoundly affected my ministry and my life. I lost that frantic, never finished feeling. No, of course I didn't get everything done in six days that I'd been trying to accomplish in seven, but I was much more carefree about it all. My preaching showed it, I lost the resentment that sometimes creeps in when one has irritating parishioners, and I was in better health.

Then we moved to a new church (nowhere near the monastery) and took on a lot of responsibilities, and the sabbath practice just kept getting put off. It's been that way for two years now. Yes, you would notice the difference in me.

What makes it hard to keep a sabbath? Mostly its the haftas. I hafta do it or it won't get done. I hafta keep on accomplishing things or God will be disappointed. Go ahead, laugh - but you say it too, don't you? Surprisingly, the demands of church members have been minimal - my demands on myself are the troublesome ones.

There's a matter of the interior haftas also, what we think we hafta do on a sabbath, or worse, what we think we are prevented from doing. And there are the insidious haftas - turning the experience into a utilitarian one, to serve the purpose of being more productive the rest of the week. That's not what a sabbath is for. Sabbath is for God, and for us.

The guidelines are simple: pray and play. I just tried to listen to God telling me I was valuable, that God delights in my company, not because I am a productive pastor, but because I am a beloved child of God's. The more I listened to God, the more I got the main idea. This sabbath practice is God's own joy - something that just has to be shared with a beloved. That's us.

I'm working again on keeping a sabbath - or, more correctly, I'm trying not to work on it. I've gotten a lot less self-righteous about the practice of sabbath keeping, a lot less ready to tell people how to do it. And I guess I am much more aware of how much of a gift this practice is, and how crucially important.

There are a lot of good and inspiring things written about sabbath keeping, and this is an abbreviated list. Eugene Peterson and Barbara Brown Taylor are particularly helpful as inviters, not taskmasters. But if you're giving it a try, then you may be the best person to listen to. Let us hear from you.

**Share Your Own Thoughts on this Issue:**

Are you able to set aside time for a personal Sabbath?  
Do you keep the Sabbath, but in a different way than one would expect?  
If so, how do you keep the Sabbath?

**Your Input:**
Date: 9/23/2003

Contribution

Thanks for the words of encouragement. I'm recently retired from a full-time job and now have more "time" to devote to my part-time pastoral job. I haven't been able to establish a Sabbath time, but will do so. I have to relate to the "haftas" and my spouse is continually reminding me I put too much into my work, and that I take nothing out for myself. Thanks again for putting this most important issue in front of me again.

Date: 9/23/2003

Contribution

Yes take time for yourself. God cares as much for you as anyone else. My Dad used to say "the graveyard is full of indispensable people."

Date: 9/23/2003

Contribution

Taking a sabbath has been a difficult thing to do, but I have a "thorn in the flesh" that forces me to take a rest. I have Mitral Valve Prolapse, which is directly affected by being overtired, overstressed, or over caffined! So, when I am overtired, or over stressed, I get a fluttery feeling, and I know I have to lay down and rest until it goes back into the normal sinus rhythm. I unfortunately learned that little lesson early in my ministry, when I ended up in the hospital with my heart in atrial fibralation, due to trying to save the church, working way too many hours, and drinking coffee to keep me going. I am glad it happened early in ministry, because it taught a valuable lesson. I now definitely take a day off, and will even take "Comp time" when I know I will have a late meeting, I rest in the morning, or take time in the middle of the day to rest, or play, when I have had an especially demanding week. I am still working on the daily devotional time. I study and pray, but not sitting down with a journal and pen, near a light in the early morning hours! I confess, I am not sure I believe in God until at least 9am, and after one cup of caffeinated coffee. My quota for the day.

Susan in Wa.

Date: 9/23/2003

Contribution

One thing that I have been doing for the last year and a half is meeting monthly with a group of Pastors for a day of spiritual formation. We study a book, discuss, check in with each other on how we are doing and pray for each other. We also take a yearly retreat, which I actually just returned from today. It was in a beautiful retreat center belonging to our Presbytery in the Cascade mountains of Washington. We did a companioning prayer, using lectio divina, praying the labyrinth, silence, and an afternoon off to hike to some nearby lakes, and a waterfall. It was wonderful, restful, invigorating, life giving, and I couldn't do without it now. Every pastor should take advantage and be intentional about their own Spiritual formation, either through denominational opportunities, or by finding a spiritual director to meet with at least once a month.

Susan in Wa.

Date: 9/23/2003

Contribution
Eugene Peterson cautions against equating a sabbath and a day off - goes so far as to call a day off "a bastard sabbath". On a day off you do non-church things, fix stuff, run errands - still in making-it-happen mode. Big difference from a sabbath.

Date: 9/26/2003

Contribution

Yhess, there is definately a difference between a day off and a sabbath time. I must admit that my sabbath time is the first thing to go when things get hectic and busy as a single mom as well there is always so much to do besides being a pastor that I constantly struggle with finding my sabbath time. It is something that I do well for a while until things get really hectic and then it slides, and the cycle keeps going. dchinks

Date: 9/29/2003

Contribution

Hi, this is a great topic. I almost always take Friday as a Sabbath Day, prayer, just hanging around, and it feels wonderful. I also take time during the day for myself. If I have an evening meeting, I take an hour or two off in the afternoon. Clergy talk about working so hard, so many hours. I used to feel guilty about my use of time, thinking I don't work as hard as others. But not, I'm not sure if that's the norm, working too hard, or if just talking about working too hard is the norm. What do others think? Of course, it is most important to follow God's will for my life, including time off, but I am curious about my brothers and sisters... LDonLI

Date: 9/30/2003

Contribution

The first question on the "Thoughts" subject - "Are you ABLE to set aside time for a personal Sabbath?" What do you mean are we ABLE? Of course we're ABLE! The question is, do we let duties or workaholism get in the way of our Sabbath time?

So, someone's funeral is scheduled on our Sabbath day ... take time in the mornings.

And, thank you for mentioning that there is a difference between a day off and Sabbath rest. Now the big question is "What's a Sabbath?"

On a day off, I work a couple hours to get the busy work out of the way. On a Sabbath I don't let myself so much as open the door to the office and do something I seldom do. Yesterday I got a haircut (it's been since June) and with my daughter off for a teacher's work day, we spent time shopping and re-engaging our relationship. I have to admit, though, that we didn't worship, only prayed. Does that mean it wasn't a Sabbath?

This is an interesting topic. I'll probably check back with this one fairly frequently.

Sally in GA

Date: 10/1/2003

Contribution

My Dear Fellowmen,
Would you believe that I have just proven that Sunday is the Sabbath Day of the followers of Jesus? This was discovered after proving the revelation of the Holy Spirit to me and several other people that Jesus was crucified on August 17, 1 BC. It took me 20 years before I finally proved that the revelation is correct. And just this last week of September 2003, I found out that Sunday was the Sabbath Day of the followers of Jesus based on the Bible and Monday is really their first day of the week. You may read the results of my research on http://www.geocities.com/peacecrusader888/jesuscrucify1.htm. There are other related webpages like passover1.htm and highsabbath1.htm. There are more manuscripts that I have to upload.

The true God bless us and protect us from harm always.

With love, your brother in Jesus, Aristeo Canlas Fernando, Peace Crusader, ICD Motto: pro aris et focis http://www.geocities.com/peacecrusader888/

Date: 10/1/2003

Contribution

Thanks for the clarification between sabbath and Day off. I agree with dchinks that because I am a single mom too, it makes it difficult to take a real sabbath, because there is only one of me. But then, that is the reason I should take a sabbath, so I can really be rested and replenished. Susan in Wa.

Date: 10/4/2003

Contribution

Sabttical

Date: 10/15/2003

Contribution

ack! *flees from the haftas* i ‘hafta’ admit (*big grin*) that i've always been a bit vague and slapdash about keeping of the Sabbath and even what day it was supposed to be! i read a very strange book once that informed me (correctly i might add) that the biblical sabbath was on a Saturday, (and that anyone who didn't honour it was breaking one of the commandments - the one about keeping the Sabbath holy) - this worried me for the longest time, for when i was reading that book i had work commitments on Saturday that quite frankly i couldn't avoid. then one day at a kind of Alpha course i asked the Question about the Sabbath and this is what i was told: a) yes the Sabbath in the OT is the Saturday and b) that you can have a Sabbath in a "day for the Lord" and it can be any day of the week!

What a relief that was to hear! - i still couldn't keep a whole day for the sabbath, in part because of work commitments, but at least i had a little understanding now. i am learning about the sabbath, and what it means, a little more at a time, and thanks be to God that i can learn!

Date: 10/17/2003

Contribution

I drive an hour from my church to feel my heartbeat and breathing slow down so that I can know that a sabbath time has begun: stopping for gas as I leave town for my "occasional" home is as much a ritual as lighting sabbath candles! I feel that I have observed sabbath if I can sleep until I awake without an alarm, spend some time pulling weeds or cleaning out beds in the garden (prime prayer time!), cook for another person (something I rarely
or never do during my work week), make no phone calls except to family, catch up on devotional reading, touch base with my 76-year-old mother in as unhurried a manner as I am able, and create order somewhere that was disordered: my laundry basket, a closet, a tabletop loaded with papers "to be read later." This active sabbath is (for me) a rest from what I do the remainder of the week. I don't do them because I must, but because there is no sense of obligation about any of them. They are "rest" because I can completely lose myself in them and focus on only one thing at a time, whereas my "work week" requires multi foci at any given time. (And frankly, with only one day for sabbath, I haven't learned to turn off the mental to-do list that scrolls when I try to do nothing in the presence of God!) Cindy in Maryland

Date: 10/23/2003

Contribution

I understand the problem with personal Sabbaths, oh do I understand!!! God though has a very pointed way of getting the message across! I guess my God figures that because I am a challenging preacher, that I can take the same back!!! Ha ha!!! Yep, I kept on with the " I haftas " as well and then one day I landed smack dab in the middle of a critical " Hafta "!!! I hafta go to the emergency I think I am having a major angina attack!!!! Yep, that was a " hafta " that I paid attention to, not having any other choice of course! So at the end of a week of tests and bed rest in the hospital, I found out that yes, I do have angina, yes I do have micro vascular disease, yes I have had two strokes, yes I do have coronary artery disease and yes I do have carotid artery disease, and wait, God wasn't through with me yet! Yes, I do have a cyst in my brain and yes I am now at the top of the list for a massive heart attack and no, I can't have any surgery as I will die on the table because of my microvascular and previous strokes!!! Now, you are probably wondering, 'well, now are you taking a personal Sabbath day?' And I am pleased to say, "yes, I am!" I take every Monday off, no matter what! (of course unless it is a matter of life and death...now I wonder, does that include me?) I have become very strict about that Monday Sabbath...and Tuesday, as much as possible. What do I do. Hmmmmm I rest, do some of my pastel work, meditate, talk to God and do some educational but not required reading. I try to do one thing for fun and relaxation at least on those Mondays. Have I learned that personal Sabbaths are critical to one's personal Spiritual Path? Absolutely. Did I know that before? Of course, but you see, I thought I could do it, I thought " I hafta " . Well, now I know that " haftas " can be shared and if nobody else wants to do these things, then they can't be very high on the religious totem pole. I had to pay a pretty high price for this lesson in 'letting go and letting God'. I pray that others that read this little ditty will benefit from my sharing, and not have to wait until God hits your head with a totem pole!!!! By the way, my cholesterol is just fine and I have never had a problem with it and I don't eat all those prohibited foods and have worked out for several years now....yes, I take some breaks from the rigorous three times a week workouts....but I get back to it and always feel better for it.

Personal sabbaths...I believe that they are imperatives for those of us who wish to survive ministry and also provide a healthy ministry for our parishioners. Blessings to all, Shalom. Rev. B

Date: 10/24/2003

Contribution

I and five ministry colleagues meet every second Thursday morning for 2 hours for mutual nurturing. We take turns hosting, and the host prepares a short liturgy and we share Communion.

While we do "shop talk", we deliberately DON'T do business, we also shares our joys and concerns about life, ministry, family and even pertinent social topics of the day.
We call ourselves "MUCC" -- Ministers Under Continuing Construction" -- so the standard line is that we getting together to "MUCC about". This group has been a Godsend for each one of us, and helps to keep us centred.

Rev Ian in Québec

Date: 10/28/2003

Contribution

I, David Ross Goldstein, ask the world family of God to forgive me of my trespasses and ask that through the precepts of Jesus Christ may I find salvation and some redemption for my soul in this hard mortal existence. I currently reside at Vermont State Hospital and I suffer terribly. I have not been an especially good person in my life. I have, however, been seeking a new life through the power of Jesus Christ over the forces of Satan. Thank You.

Date: 10/29/2003

Contribution

I, David Ross Goldstein, suffer terribly in this cruel place known as Vermont State Hospital. I am trying very hard to be a good person through the following of precepts taught through Jesus Christ. I only wish that unkind staff here at VSH would not try to ruin my clothes in the dryer. Thank you and God bless everybody who dwells in the light of God's Divine Dispensation (the gospel). I, David Ross Goldstein, believe in the power of Jesus!

Date: 10/31/2003

Contribution

I, David Ross Goldstein, reside on the Brooks One Ward at Vermont State Hospital in the town of Waterbury, Vermont. I am treated terribly here by the mental health workers at VSH. They have ruined many of my clothes in the dryer. I am somebody who believes in the power of Jesus Christ over the forces of Satan which can be very powerful over the common Everyman. Please, would somebody pray for me? I ask that somebody acknowledge that I am alive and suffering at the hands of cruel mental health staff. May I please have somebody pray for me? I, David Ross Goldstein believe in the power of Jesus Christ over the forces of Satan! Think of me when you read the book of Job.

Date: 11/4/2003

Contribution

I recall there was no sabbath when the first Adam walked with God, as man was in his rest with God. It was Christ who so proclaimed that "He" was the sabbath to the Pharrisee's. The word sabbath means "rest". David broke the sabbath as did the disciples of Christ, yet they walked with God and knew that God alone was their director and provider. These entered into the rest of God. Old Israel did not enter into the rest of God because of thier rebellion yet there was still a Rest provided for thosse who surrendered unto obedience to God and the covenant He so provided. I am not of the Levitical priesthood but of a priesthood much higher, a priesthood that Jesus Christ is the High Priest as well as the Sabbath, if I be led by the Spirit of God then it is Gods work through me and I have no need of a sabbath as the sabbath was made for people not people made for the sabbath. If I truly be in Christ, then I like Christ have ceased from my own works and do only what the Father has shown me. Indeed I have entered into the REST of God because I am not of my own, but belong to him who is my Sabbath and Lord. Unlike the first Adam who was cast out of Eden and made to labor for his
provisions, I am reconciled by the second Adam by the power of his blood that I now am able to enter into the rest God had given to the first Adam. If I walk with God then I have no need for rest nor the Law as the Law was given to law breakers. It is written that the sabbath is everlasting, even as God is everlasting so is the rest that He gives to his own. We are to be Holy 24-7 not just that of one sunrise to sunset day.

Date: 11/6/2003

Contribution

I started considering a sabbath many years ago when I had a "real" job. I decided that Saturday not only had scripture, and tradition in it's favor, but it was reasonable, for my schedule. However, I didn't make an issue of it either in my life, or in my practice. It was simply a day in which I didn't take on any regular activity. If I want to explore the country, take a trip, go to a meeting that's what I do. If someone needs some help or company, I am free for whatever happens. If I want to cook, sew, watch TV or do some special work that is my undivided time. The main thing is I don't let it get cluttered with hafta's.

Date: 11/6/2003

Contribution

DRG,

Your plea has been heard. God's blessings will abound, though it may be difficult to see those blessings in your present situation. Nevertheless, they are there.

MRE

Date: 11/22/2003

Contribution

In the first "chapter" of her book, "Inner Peace for Busy People," Joan Borysenko suggests "put aside an hour a day - yes, I really mean that - to relax in whatever way you enjoy." She points out that, with appropriate self-care, a person will actually be more productive and at peace within. I was sceptical, but, considering what I might "enjoy," I realised that taking time to read a good novel or a personally chosen theological book, not one I "hafta" read, with favourite music in the background, is a rare treat, and that it would be good to do it more. It has become a vital part of my day, not a "hafta" at all, and my scepticism has vanished. My prayer time is richer, I am indeed calmer and more productive, and I feel more like a human being again, in spite of/because of (!) actually building that special hour into my hectic days! What would you "enjoy" for an hour a day? Try it - and may it be a blessing for you as it has been for me! Shalom - Frandy

Date: 12/12/2003

Contribution

Yes, I have managed to keep a Sabbath on Monday's. For the first time in my ministry I am at a church large enough to have staff. My biggest challenge is to delegate, delegate, delegate or to remember that I'm not the only one. (Tigger, you know.) The local ministerial group sponsors a prayer meeting on Monday. They have been the ones to pressure me about participating. You would think that other ministers would get it. Sue in Ohio

Date: 12/13/2003
I had the chance to hear Barbara Cawthorne Crafton speak recently on the have-to's vs. the want-to's. Prayer is not a have-to, she said. Prayer is a gift. If we take the time for prayer, it is a gift to us from God. My ideal Sabbath day contains the gift of prayer.

peg in nj

Date: 12/19/2003

Contribution

Thanks for bringing up this topic. I have one major question: as a second-career, newly ordained pastor, I had been accustomed to having 2 and even 3 full days off or Sabbaths a week. When are we clergy going to organize a concerted effort to make 2 days off the norm rather than some radical crazy idea? Our own worst enemies are our colleagues who say it can't be done. It can be. We may need to change our ways of doing things and cut the apron strings of dependence upon the pastor. (I think some clergy like being the center of things but I would prefer to see the congregation "driving" most activities.)

Date: 1/4/2004

Contribution

One's can have time for the sabbath if he would learn to share responisity with others. I know sometime you think you are the only one but their good people out there who can do the job if you only give them a chance. Trust in the Lord to send you the right person, who might be right their behind you.

God Bless
Rev McCollough

Date: 1/8/2004

Contribution

A sabbath! What a wonderful concept. Like all of us, I struggle with this one. Particularly in that I would like for my sabbath to include some sort of corporate worship in which I am not celebrant/leadership. That is the truly difficult opportunity to find, in my experience. However, lately I 've been thinking along some slightly different lines. Why is it that most Americans have this segment of time called a "weekend" (whether or not it falls on Sat/Sun) but we as clergy seem to think that we owe our vocations 12 hour work days PLUS 6 days a week? One day does not sabbath (or any other kind of R & R)make. IN fact, one day usually gets rapidly eaten up in taking care of personal business: dentist/doctor, laundry, errands, etc.... Maybe it isn't just one sabbath-day a week we need to be thinking about here. Perhaps the larger issue includes self-care on a larger scale? Rev. She in NC

Date: 1/12/2004

Contribution

Would like to email Dr. Culp but see no address. Help! pc

Date: 1/15/2004

Contribution

I, David Ross Goldstein, current languish as a mental patient on the Brooks One Unit of Vermont State Hospital in Waterbury, Vermont. This mental
health worker named Daniel Burke is extremely cruel towards me. He is on my treatment team and I ask for Jesus Christ to speak with Mr. Daniel Burke and ask him to show mercy and empathy towards David Ross Goldstein (myself). Thank You and praise Jesus Christ amen!

Date: 1/16/2004

Contribution

how can we be faithful to the portion of the scripture that tells us not you, nor your servants, nor the stranger in your gates etc. On Sunday, when most Christians observe Sabbath the favorite pastime is to go out to lunch afterward, thus requiring all of the poor can't work a normal job folks work. Also because of the relaxing of this tradition in our culture now we have moved as a nation to requiring the poorest of workers to work on Christmas, and other holidays to serve us, then they can return and go home to family. We are asked to be counter culture people in a work obsessed and overworked awarded culture. How many of our Sabbath observing clergy are promoted for taking a day off and a Sabbath? I think that it is important to take a day to reflect on God through reading and prayer. It is essential in good sermon preparation, because a tired preacher has no spiritual energy to give to the listening congregation.

Date: 1/26/2004

Contribution

Let me say this with love, I read here a lot of complaints about being over-worked. Maybe the reason is because you have not kept the will of God for you as you think. Maybe a prayerful study of the roll God has for women professing godliness in the Lords church will reveal to you the reason for your unrest. Both Paul and Peter as well as Moses had quite a few instructions for the work women should be doing to be pleasing to God, none of them included leadership in the church. Since God is the same today, yesterday and tomorrow, I don't think anything has been revised in that area. It does however become a problem area for you to preach about, unless you either avoid it altogether or preach falsely. There are many different types of ministries, preaching and pastoring are only two of them. And again I say this with love for your salvation that you may prayerfully reconsider your calling to be sure if is what the Lord had in mind for you. Remember that if you keep all the commandments yet offend in only one, you're guilty of all.

With the Lords blessing, CT

Date: 2/3/2004

Contribution

(I wrote this two days ago on my on-line journal. I am a seminary student only beginning the journey of ministry...)

why is it that serenity is so foreign to our culture? we are inundated with busy-ness, hardly allowed to breathe...but we're successful, dang it. And who decided running around with your head cut off meant you were worth something? having a bajillion things on your agenda for the day translates to having meaning in life? seems quite the opposite for me.

these days i just long to sit and read, think thoughts that take longer than five seconds to find a solution (and maybe there isn't a solution at all...), and have whole days with nothing planned.

nothing planned she said?! why, i haven't heard of such a thing!!! she must
be lazy! having a whole day wasted on day dreams and foolish story books...

i find myself making my schedule so that i do have such days. take for example my mondays this semester: i don't have class and decided to ask off from work every week on that day consistently. good plan--except in order to justify this to myself and others i call it a "homework day" or a day to prepare for my week. which is all fine and good to a certain extent...but what about a "me day?" (and i think we all deserve this, not just myself)

i'm sure a lot of this thought comes from the book i'm reading, Prodigal Summer. one of the characters lives by herself in the woods and seems to have all the time she needs for discovery and appreciation. my mind knows she's just a fictional character, but i'm jeaous just the same. she doesn't seem without purpose just because she isn't always DOING something...

and you know, life is always filled with things i need to do, things i want to do even. volunteer here or there, clean something, spend more time reading those textbooks i paid a million dollars for...

but what about time to meditate on scripture, pray deeply with a quiet spirit open to hearing, stop to talk to a neighbor, go to that great spot on that trail in the park with a blanket and read for hours...or maybe not read, maybe just sit, taking in the sights, sounds and smells of the creation that normally just spins around me so fast i can't focus on any of it? what about it?

and why, oh why, can't i live a serene life without feeling guilty?

when i was in ethiopia this summer we weren't allowed to ask "why" questions. mostly because the people there are highly illogical, (or so it would seem to us Americans who have it all figured out...right...), but mainly because to the "why" questions swarming constantly within us...

there are no answers.

Date: 2/7/2004

Contribution

I keep the "Jewish Sabbath" from Friday evening to Saturday evening as do most people of my faith, Seventh Day Baptists. We share in corporate worship on Sabbath (Sat.) morning and rest on the Sabbath. It is difficult to do in a Sunday culture, but God's blessings are more than worth the effort. God has provided us with a commandment to rest on HIS Sabbath. It is a wonderful practice and I encourage all to follow it. Jo B.

Date: 2/8/2004

Contribution

This is a wonderful topic and very close to my heart. Seeing so many people express the "you can do it if you really want to" idea, I am going to go out on a limb here with an alternative point of view.

Of course I agree that keeping a sabbath is God's will as expressed in scripture. But I have honestly come to wonder over the years whether the sabbath was meant to apply to women! Man's work is from sun to sun, and can skip a day out of every seven, but women's work is never done. The greatest difference I see in the lives of men and women, in biblical times and now, is that many more women than men are engaged in the kind of caretaking work that literally must be done every day.

My mom is in ill health. She does not have any specifically terminal illness, she is just bedbound and weak and unable to care for herself. We have both decided as a quality of life issue that she will live at home as long as she is able. I am her only child and her sole caretaker--she lives with me. Our nearest relatives live more than two hours away.
In some ways it is like having an infant. On the sabbath, the diapers still need to be changed. Food can be prepared in advance but she still needs to be spoon fed. If she spills a glass of water on her bandages that must be kept dry, then the dressings need to be changed right away, sabbath or not. Instead of the 2am feeding, I wake up to administer the 3am pain medicine. It is different than having a child because babysitters are easier to find than eldersitters (there’s a pastoral growth industry for you!).

If we were rich, I could hire a private nurse to get a break, but of course we can’t afford that. She cannot be put in short-term respite care because she is incontinent. I am often told that this is too much work for me and I should put her in a nursing home, but the only long-term nursing facilities we could afford are the kind of places you wouldn’t want to board your dog, much less trust with the care of a cherished parent. So I have been providing this home nursing care more or less non-stop for almost three years (except for her occasional hospital stays).

I realize in the abstract that it is not God’s will for me to be exhausted, and I’m not sure how to reconcile what seems like a contradiction in the commandments: I am honoring my mother at the end of her life at the expense of having to “work” seven days a week. Somehow God gives me the energy to keep going, to fulfill my ministerial responsibilities, and to respond sweetly when people ever-so-gently (and sometimes not so gently) chastise me for not taking time off for myself (especially when they justify their criticism with scripture).

I know I am serving Christ by serving her, I see the face of Christ in her, and I know she feels the love of God pouring through me as I care for her, and that makes the work holy. It is as holy as the eucharistic “work” we do as ministers on Sundays when laypeople are having their Sabbath. The best I can do is the occasional non-dialysis day when I can have a few hours worth of mini-retreat while she is sleeping. I also make an effort to live prayerfully and serenely moment to moment--to rest in the arms of Christ as I go throughout my day. Would love to correspond with anyone about this, but don’t know the rules about posting email addresses here. I will check back on this board as I am working on my sermon this week to see what responses have been posted.

Babypriest in MA

Date: 3/1/2004

Contribution

Why does everyone think monastery’s are spiritual? Is it because we think spirituality is something we do and not who we are. Quite frankly I would think the monastery is one of the least spiritual places, as they put so much emphasis on doing things, it is works spirituality, not spiritual spirituality. Don’t get me wrong, but just think to yourself does burning a candle and humming a chant somehow connect you to God, does not talking make you more spiritual. Maybe it is time we focused on the bible’s definition of what it means to be spiritual instead of Catholic tradition.

I have taking a spirituality class and felt it had nothing to do with being spiritually, we were to practice breathing, close our eyes and picture things, look at objects and describe how we saw God in them, nothing was ever mention about the Holy Spirit and how He works, His attributes and how He has worked throughout the church. A very concern pastor.

Date: 4/7/2004

Contribution

What would be some guidelines for keeping the Sabbath. This is my second year as a pastor, so I am still trying to build strong disciplines. I have asked a group of pastors before about keeping the Sabbath and they could not
i HAVE A BIG PROBLEM WITH A SABBATH. I HAVE AN INNER CITY CATHOLIC PARISH WITH A SCHOOL. I have a lot of funerals. I also have a 7:00am mass almost every weekday, and I also have a school mass on Thursday. Its very difficult to get a full 24 hours off. There seems to be no place where I can go to get away. Does anyone have any ideas.

stanko@floodcity.net

Greetings from The Living Sword http://www.thelivingsword.com/ We need to understand what THE TRUE HEAVENLY SABBATH is. For there has been a great falling away from the heavenly life giving knowledge of it http://www.thelivingsword.com/apocaofenoch.htm Thank you. The Living Sword

Yes I am a Sabbath-keeper, and have been for 25 years! What puzzles me is that the word, "Sabbath" means "Saturday", therefore, the Sabbath should be observed on the 7th day of the week....that being Saturday. Therefore, because the Sabbath day has been blessed, and sanctified by God, how can you choose your own day to take as your "Sabbath". The New Testament indicates that it was Jesus' custom to go to the Synagogue on the Sabbath. We also know that the day that Jesus was crucified was, "Good friday" and the day He was Ressurected was, "Easter Sunday", therefore, even in death, Christ rested on the Sabbath. Soooooo, therefore, biblically speaking, nonsensical would tell us that we are to observe the 7th Day Sabbath as the day that God, hollowed, blessed and sanctified.

IF YOU LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.
"Good Friday" and the day He was resurrected was, "Easter Sunday", therefore, even in death, Christ rested on the Sabbath. Sooooco, therefore, biblically speaking, commonsene would tell us that we are to observe the 7th Day Sabbath as the day that God, hallowed, blessed and sanctified.

IF YOU LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.

Date: 5/11/2004

Contribution

Yes I am a Sabbath-keeper, and have been for 25 years! What puzzles me is that the word, "Sabbath" means "Saturday", therefore, the Sabbath should be observed on the 7th day of the week....that being Saturday. Therefore, because the Sabbath day has been blessed, and sanctified by God, how can you choose your own day to take as your "Sabbath". The New Testament indicates that it was Jesus' custom to go to the Synagogue on the Sabbath. We also know that the day that Jesus was crucified was, "Good Friday" and the day He was resurrected was, "Easter Sunday", therefore, even in death, Christ rested on the Sabbath. Sooooco, therefore, biblically speaking, commonsene would tell us that we are to observe the 7th Day Sabbath as the day that God, hallowed, blessed and sanctified.

IF YOU LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS. How can you expect to receive the blessings of the Lord if you don't obey His 4th Commandment?

Date: 5/28/2004

Contribution

Personally Itry religiously to maintain Sabath Simply because If Iwont take care of my own needs AND as well the needs of my family and our spiritual needs then we can expect satan & or the world too AND lcerainly woudnt want that any way shape or form.

Date: 6/10/2004

Contribution

Friday is my "Sabbath"! I have told the members of the church that unless there is blood involved, somebody has died or the church is in ashes, do not call me or bother me at home. I try to sleep late that morning, eat leisurely meals and spend quality time with my wife and/or family.

Date: 6/11/2004

Contribution

I learned about the Sabbath day 7 years ago. I must say it has taken more than half of that to figure out I had it all wrong and burdensome. God wants the Sabbath to be a delight and not a burden, if I ever feel burdened I know I have not come into complete communion with Him. How often do we do this and how sad, but thank GOd for His loving grace and never failing love to embrace us back to His presence. I had never really known that the bible actually spoke of Sabbath rest in terms of an actual day. A day of delight and letting go of your every day cares and work, so to delight yourself in His presence. As you said, God desires to be with us without us being distracted with the stuff and haftoo's. The Sabbath was made for man. It's an awesome blessing when we learn to let go and let God. You have discovered the secret to allow God to be your friend and lover. He wants nothing more than to be with you and you with Him, you in Him and Him in you...One with God. WOW!!! That excites me. Jesus came to reveal that unconditional love and longing to befriend, love and heal the heart and minds of men that as a freewill individual that you might choose Him and your joy will be full. He is
and will restore us as we walk with Him daily and set ourselves apart to meet with Him every Sabbath. God is so good. Satan has done much to distract and pre-occupy humanity with all he has been able to conjure up to "entertain" men, women, and children. We are so busy with stuff and the hatfoo's that we miss what's really important and vital to live happy and peaceful lives. Christ was our example in all things. I keep the seventh day Sabbath, I do not work or require any services on that day where another would have to work for me, I try to keep everything simple, and to surround myself with nature. I try to read, pray and in my case I have kids I try to plan activities that draw them to think of God things. Depending the nature of someone's need on the Sabbath, then I intervene. Ex: I will not clean up someone's yard on the Sabbath, I can help them with that on another day, but I will help a sick person, prisoner, or cook a meal for a hungry person. Jesus kept the Sabbath Holy by being in communion with His Father and by loving others the only way He knows how...selflessly. I pray this is true and real of me too as I continue to seek His will in my life. He is centered on you and me. As we are being changed and renewed in His Spirit He also guides on to all Truth to teach all nations about His love and Truths. Everything God did for us was an act of love, including His law. Even His law is Love. Could we go wrong with His law? No, but don't keep the law to be saved. It's impossible I tried for a long time. It will be the most frustrating thing you have encounter. ...but surrender to Him and call on Him and He will dwell in you. AHH! As He dwells in you and you dwell in Him the most beautiful change occurs. The Sabbath, God knew was more than necessary cause we are easily lead to follow the crowd, be overworked, or plainly just love the pleasures of this world to the point that we are blinded and/or decensitized. We tend to forget Him and the wonderful rest He offers physically, emotionally, and spiritually. God wants you to be free from the bondage of sin and the cares of this world. The Sabbath is only the beginning experience of the Eternal rest we shall enjoy with Jesus. Each day will be like a Sabbath. Praise God. He is good. I pray this was helpful. That the Lord Almighty continues to bless and guide you. Love in Christ Jesus our Lord, Norma

Date: 7/6/2004

Contribution

I knew I was overdoing the "ministry thing" when my daughter said to me one day, "Why don't you just move your bed into the church since you spend so much time there!" Since she left home I'm even more guilty of not being a good steward of my time and wonder why I'm exhausted. Thanks for the reminder about taking a sabbath - I'm going to try it out soon. I PROMISE! :-) Muriel in Princeton (MBurr45@aol.com)

Date: 7/30/2004

Contribution

I came looking for this today because I was feeling that I needed a Sabbath. I'm serving my first church and keep returning to the words of my field ed. professors -- clergy care is so important and in it, you must worship God. I know that the work I do during the week is worshipful, but there is something to contemplation as well -- something to silence, to listening, to remembering why it is we're here and why I do what I do. I'm feeling burned out today -- I had a couple of extra worship services this week and still haven't put together my sermon for Sunday. I need a Sabbath, but my children need mom on this, my "day off." I know I need it, but haven't figured out how to.

Date: 9/2/2004

Contribution
I try to keep sabbath, but as in all my attempts to follow the law, I do it imperfectly. But it IS the law (one of the "Big Ten", right up there with "Thou shall not kill."). The key for me is that the law is meant as a gift, a joy, a delight, not a burden. The law was given as a grace, not a punishment. Jesus came to fulfill the demand of the law, BUT NOT TO ABOLISH THE LAW. The law is still good.

Why do we not take Sabbath? Because we think that we are so important that folks can't manage without us? (Who is the God around here? ...Me?) Because we NEED the money? (Thou shall have no other Gods.) Because we are too stubborn or prideful to ask for help? (Because, of course, we don't need it. Our limits are an illusion. After all we are all gods, right?) Sarcastic, yes, but when you get to the bottom of it isn't idolatry the primary source of workaholism?

Sabbath keeping may be the only way that we can keep the first commandment! We need a weekly reminder that God is God, and we aren't.

That doesn't mean that we CAN'T serve others on the Sabbath. It just means that we can't keep the Sabbath while we are doing something because we "must". We can keep Sabbath and do just about any ethical thing that we "want" to do.

This past Sabbath I counseled a couple facing a crisis. I'm sure God would have provided support from another source if He had not given me the desire to be there. But I did have the desire to be there. And because it was not a burden, it energized me to be with them. I don't feel that I broke sabbath. If I did this Every week for Every "crisis", or if I thought I "had to" counsel them that day, I would have been breaking Sabbath.

Sure, as a parent, there are things that need doing, but there are ways to minimize them one day a week. And if parenting becomes a burden, I really ought to find a way to take a break (even if I have to find and pay for a sitter). Mostly my children are an enjoyable part of my Sabbath.

In the Jewish tradition it is a good deed to make love to your spouse on the Sabbath. Learning that little tid bit was like lighting a lightbulb over my head. "Ahh... That is what the Sabbath is for!"

Moses gives two justifications for the Sabbath. First, we are to follow the example of God, who rested after work, and appreciated His creation. Second, we are to remember that we were slaves in Egypt, but we are now free. Freedom and appreciation of the God who gives it, that is the purpose of my Sabbath keeping.

And, of course, as a corrective to my self centered idolatry!

ss in PA.

Date: 9/2/2004

Contribution


Date: 9/27/2004

Contribution

As a new exploring candidate to the ministry; I find myself immersed in learning and reading, preaching and more learning and reading. The more I study, the more I realize I need to know, thus more reading...Just yesterday (Sunday)my husband asked me what I wanted to do in the afternoon. I replied "anything that doesn't make me have to think." We spent a glorious sun filled afternoon driving through the country side. Not speaking, just appreciating God's beauty and drawing in God's presence in the silence. I
awoke today refreshed and ready to renew my studies...yes, I believe you all are right in that, Sabbath time is vital to our well being and our relationship with the Lord. K in VT

Date: 9/27/2004

Contribution

My husband and I are both ordained pastors. We have different needs/priorities. And we have different definitions of “Sabbath.” I would LOVE to spend one day a week (who am I kidding? I’d be content with one day a MONTH!) with absolutely nothing on the agenda but time spent with one another and with God, preferably sitting still: talking, praying, listening.

He, on the other hand, always wants to be running around. Even when we do manage to set aside “Sabbath” time, he wants to spend it hiking in the mountains, driving around the countryside, etc. I won’t speak for my husband and say that he is capable of communicating with the Lord while doing all that running, but I sure can’t!

One thing I’ve learned in this relationship: One person’s “Sabbath” is another’s torture!

Date: 10/21/2004

Contribution

A bit of facts to help us decide! A study by my state’s denomination found 26% of the clergy surveyed were in clinical depression. The most consistent factor in this 26% was that they failed to take a Sabbath. Revup

Date: 10/23/2004

Contribution

Until Friday I have had two full time jobs. I am a pastor and also was an outside sales person for an office equipment/design firm. It was my job to develop the church market--which I did for more than 20 years. Two weeks ago I realized that I am not superwoman and finally resigned and worked out my notice. The day I handed my supervisor my letter of resignation I felt as though a weight had lifted. Gone was the tension in my shoulders, neck and back; gone was the almost manic stage I had been in for some time. I have not had the time to take a Sabbath as yet, but feel as though my Sabbath will come in due time. I am simplifying my life. I have resigned from Rotary, the chamber of commerce and Presbytery council. I have come to realize that God is not leading me to an early death; I have been doing that all too well by myself. What made me come to the conclusion that I could take time for myself—the Grand Canyon. When my husband and I looked out over the rim and I saw how insignificant I am I realized that God made me for something more than stress. I look forward to getting more involved with my congregation and being able to be a part of the local ministerial association. I also look forward to be directing by God instead of trying to be the director.

Date: 12/16/2004

Contribution

Dear Preacher There is only one SABBATH DAY AND THAT FALLS ON THE SEVENTH-DAY OF THE WEEK (SATURDAY).You cannot keep the other days of the week as your Sabbath,there's no such thing.God has only one Sabbath and He expects all of us to keep it right.This is not scorn but revelation for you.Read Luke 6:46 and Ex 20:8-11. Pastor Andre Beaumonte D.Min.
Date: 12/22/2004

Contribution

Thanks for your insights. They resonate with me. I've put an article on my website that you might like to check in this regard. Go to www.barnabasnetwork.com, click on Resources, click on Pastoral Perspectives and go to "The Mistress". It's very much along the lines you have written.

Date: 1/18/2005

Contribution

That's awesome how you decided to keep the sabbaths but isn't sabbath the seventh day and Thurs is 5th?

Date: 2/4/2005

Contribution

I too used to live near a convent (I am female) and went there to keep sabbath in the community. I think the hardest thing about sabbath now is that there seems no place to go be alone. In the summer time I can go outdoors, but in the winter time my husband who is retired is in the house, and besides the house and the church are full of work.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


(Abbreviated Bibliography from: God's Own Joy, DMin Dissertation, Karin Bascom Culp)

And shall go in and out, and find pasture. The fold will ever be open to him who enters by the Door. He will have perfect freedom to enter, whenever storm or danger or night approaches. He will lead out and find pasture for his flock. find pasture; green and good pasture; pasture for their souls; the words of faith, and good doctrine; the wholesome words of Christ Jesus; the ordinances, the breasts of consolation; yea, Christ himself, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed: the Persic version renders it, "and shall a pastor", or "shepherd"; see Jeremiah 3:15. Exodus 16:25, etc., Eat that to-day: for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord; to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Pulpit Commentary. The Shepherd knows where the green grass is and it is He that satisfies us there. Psalms 3:5 For the LORD sustained me. Comment: The first thought of these green pastures is physical food, but we must also not forget of the spiritual food. Mention: Matt. 4:4 Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Lord Of The Sabbath SermonCentral PowerPoint Template. Rest For The Weary SermonCentral PowerPoint Template. Sermon Topics: Comfort, Rest.