

Sabbath

Ephesians 5:1 says that we are to be imitators of God, the one who completed the tasks of creation and rested. But beyond the call to imitate God, God actually *commands* us to take time for sabbath rest. In our modern culture, though, it seems we have much difficulty taking sabbath time. There's always one more thing to do, and we keep giving into the "tyranny of the urgent" to do its bidding.

Sabbath rest is more than setting aside one day for holy purposes. God isn't asking us to work 24/6 instead of 24/7. We need rest built into *each* day, but do we allow it to happen? There are many compelling reasons to rest:

- We are created in God's image. God rests. We are failing to live into the image in which we are created by not resting.
- Taking time to rest helps us trust God. So we didn't complete such-and-such a task. Can we trust God that all will be okay? Can we trust that "it doesn't all depend on us?"
- We are human *beings*, not human *doings*; yet, how often do we value ourselves (and others) by what we *do* instead of who we *are*. Sabbath is a gift of grace that allows us to simply be in God's presence, knowing that God loves us just as we are. Are we able to love others in the same way?
- Sabbath is also an opportunity to devote some time to God in prayer, meditation, study, worship, fasting, etc. But, we need to be careful that these activities don't fall into "doing" additional tasks where we feel obligated (maybe even guilty?) to stay in God's good graces. Sometimes what God wants from us is just our rest. God is present even then!
- Sabbath is grace. Just as the grace in Holy Communion nourishes us for the work of living out our covenant with God, sabbath rest is grace that rejuvenates us for the work of the covenant.
- Sabbath can help us see the needs of others, too. The Fourth of the Ten Commandments makes clear that this rest isn't just for us. It's for everybody, including family, servants, neighbors, and even animals. But how often do we approach sabbath as a time to put someone else to work? The command is also for us to contemplate and act on how we may provide rest for others.