



// OVERFLOW
LIVING WATER FOR AN EMPTY AGE

SABBATH



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**THE LAW OF THE LORD IS PERFECT,
REFRESHING THE SOUL.
THE STATUTES OF THE LORD ARE TRUSTWORTHY,
MAKING WISE THE SIMPLE.
THE PRECEPTS OF THE LORD ARE RIGHT,
GIVING JOY TO THE HEART.
THE COMMANDS OF THE LORD ARE RADIANT,
GIVING LIGHT TO THE EYES.
THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS PURE,
ENDURING FOREVER.
THE DECREES OF THE LORD ARE FIRM,
AND ALL OF THEM ARE RIGHTEOUS.**

PSALM 19:7-9

WHAT IS SABBATH?



SABBATH IS THE BIBLICAL PRACTICE OF REST. IN GENESIS, GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS VALUE OF REST: “BY THE SEVENTH DAY GOD HAD FINISHED THE WORK HE HAD BEEN DOING; SO ON THE SEVENTH DAY HE RESTED FROM ALL HIS WORK. THEN GOD BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY AND MADE IT HOLY, BECAUSE ON IT HE RESTED FROM ALL THE WORK OF CREATING THAT HE HAD DONE” (GENESIS 2:2-3).

FROM THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED A RHYTHM OF HOLY REST AS A GIFT FOR HIS CREATION.

Throughout the Old Testament, God repeatedly values rest for his people. In Exodus, God gives Moses the Ten Commandments by which God's people were meant to order their lives. One included keeping the Sabbath, or practicing a weekly rhythm of rest.

“REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY BY KEEPING IT HOLY. SIX DAYS YOU SHALL LABOR AND DO ALL YOUR WORK, BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS A SABBATH TO THE LORD YOUR GOD. ON IT YOU SHALL NOT DO ANY WORK, NEITHER YOU, NOR YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER, NOR YOUR MALE OR FEMALE SERVANT, NOR YOUR ANIMALS, NOR ANY FOREIGNER RESIDING IN YOUR TOWNS. FOR IN SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, BUT HE RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY. THEREFORE THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY AND MADE IT HOLY.”

- EXODUS 20:8-11

In Hebrew, the word for “holy” is *qodesh*, which translates to “be set apart.” God repeatedly calls his people to holiness in scripture, and keeping the Sabbath Day holy reminds us that we should set aside this one day and mark it as ‘set apart’ from our other typical days.

Notice that the Sabbath command partners with the command to work. God delights in our work and honors our efforts through his command to rest. We are meant to be a restored people. Through rest, we can become more patient, calm, loving, and present with those in our lives.



This month we will reflect on how God delights in our work and calls us to holy rest. How do you fill your days? What does your work mean for your life and for the Kingdom?

For some, the Sabbath is a 24-hour period where the world is set aside. That does not mean Sabbath has to look the same for you.

IN THE SABBATH, ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL REFLECTS:

// Friday evenings in my home were the climax of the week, as they are for every religious Jewish family. My mother and I kindled the lights for the Sabbath, and all of a sudden, I felt transformed, emotionally and even physically. After lighting the candles in the dining room, we would walk into the living room, which had windows overlooking the Hudson River, facing west, and we would marvel at the sunset that soon arrived. The sense of peace that came upon us as we kindled the lights was created, in part, by the hectic tension of Fridays. Preparation for a holy day, my father often said, was as important as the day itself. During the busy mornings my mother shopped for groceries, and in the afternoons the atmosphere grew increasingly nervous as she cooked. My father came home from his office an hour or two before sunset to take care of his own preparations, and as the last minutes of the workweek came to a close, both of my parents were in the kitchen, frantically trying to remember what they might have forgotten to prepare—Had the kettle boiled? Was the tin covering the stove? Was the oven turned on?

Then, suddenly, it was time: twenty minutes before sunset. Whatever hadn't been finished in the kitchen we simply left behind as we lit the candles and blessed the arrival of the Sabbath. My father writes, 'The Sabbath comes like a caress, wiping away fear, sorrow and somber memories.' //

Do not be overwhelmed by the idea of a 24-hour Sabbath; God's decree to rest looks different for everyone. Some people experience holy rest by being out in nature or simply turning off their cell phones for an afternoon. **The key to this month's practice of Sabbath is that whatever you choose to do, you intentionally create space in your life to become a restored person of God.**

OUR PROMISE

This month is about creating margin in your life so you can see how God is working for your good, without you earning it. God calls for rest and restoration in a world that values exceptional productivity. While initially difficult and uncomfortable, the journey to create margin will sincerely bless your spiritual life and, as a result, your daily life.

A FEW POINTERS & SUGGESTIONS:



BE EXPECTANT:

What does a life with God look like for you? Prayerfully invite God into your life and ask how to create space for a bountiful relationship with him.



APPRECIATE THE WISDOM:

Challenge yourself to enter this practice with an appreciation for God's command to rest.



BE REALISTIC:

You are called by God to create Sabbath in your life. However, your Sabbath does not have to look like your neighbor's. How can you create space for God in your week?

WHY DO WE SABBATH?



DEVELOPING A SPIRITUAL LIFE
REQUIRES COMPLETE SURRENDER
TO GOD'S WILL FOR OUR LIVES.
FROM THE BEGINNING, GOD HAS
CALLED HIS PEOPLE TO BE HOLY OR
SET APART. GOD DESIRES THAT WE
LOOK DIFFERENT FROM THE WORLD
AROUND US.

In a world and society where production is the understood value, how do we follow God's command to rest? And what does that mean for how we live out both the command to work and the command to rest?

A significant part of the Sabbath practice is recognizing that no amount of work will earn you favor with God. You already have God's favor. God's blessing and favor in your life is a gift given freely regardless of merit. God gave us the Sabbath practice in all his goodness and sovereignty, knowing we need time to rest and recharge for the good work ahead of us. God's grace is sufficient.



Take 5 minutes to write out your schedule for the week. Be sure to include appointments, tasks, commitments to friends and family, etc. What do your days of work look like when it is all in writing?

REFLECTIONS:



What does it mean for your life to know that God wishes for you to be set apart as a follower of Christ?



When or where do you experience God's blessings in your life?



Do you trust in the goodness of God fully enough to accept the gift of holy rest?

WHAT DID JESUS DO?

Dallas Willard was once asked how he would describe Jesus in only one word. His answer may stun you. Jesus can be described as loving, caring, a savior, and a giver; so many different adjectives could describe Jesus. Dallas Willard chose relaxed. Jesus was relaxed.

Today, that word brings connotations of laziness, weakness, and even indifference, yet Willard uses it to describe the Savior of the world.



When you hear Jesus described as relaxed, what feelings does that invoke? Reflect on your week and notice when you felt relaxed.

When we look at the life of Jesus, we see the relaxed and the passionate Jesus. Both are good and true. However, the relaxed Jesus allows us to see the patient Jesus, the giving Jesus, and the forgiving Jesus. The relaxed Jesus was available.

After waiting 30 years to begin his ministry, one of Jesus' first acts was to pull away to the wilderness to spend time with God and to renew the energy needed to move forward in his ministry (Mark 1:12). Jesus sought time away with God to be the patient, kind, and gentle Savior we see in the scriptures.

In fact, have you ever noticed how Jesus' timing is never hurried? In the Gospels, Jesus is always willing to be redirected to minister to those around him, even when he is on a mission. Do not miss this: Jesus was able to be relaxed because he was confident that the Lord was good. Jesus knew that God already had a good plan and was therefore able to rest on the promises of God.

// WHAT WERE JESUS' PERSONAL SABBATH DAYS LIKE? //

The scriptures tell us that Jesus went to the synagogue and rested, sometimes alone or with a few friends. As Ruth Haley Barton mentions in this month's podcast, Jesus is always shown either leaving or going to *Shabbat* (the Jewish term for Sabbath). The Gospel accounts illustrate him taking walks through grain fields or by the lake and conversing with those he encounters along the way.

In scripture, we often see Jesus respond to the needs of the people around him, even on his Sabbath days; he teaches, heals, and delivers those in need. In other words, he did a lot of “work” on the Sabbath. He did not follow the rules set by the religious leaders of his day. This challenged the tradition of a prescriptive Sabbath. Jesus instead modeled holy rest and communion with his Heavenly Father.

Did Jesus break the Sabbath? Did he show or teach us that we do not need to keep the Sabbath anymore? The answer to both questions is no. Instead, he redefined how the Sabbath is meant for us.



Reflections: What is the first story of Jesus that comes to mind when you consider rest and Sabbath?

WHAT DID JESUS TEACH?



JESUS MODELED BEING A RELAXED
PRESENCE TO THOSE WITH WHOM
HE SHARED LIFE. HE ALSO TAUGHT
HIS FRIENDS HOW TO PRIORITIZE
THEIR ENERGY BY INTENTIONALLY
CHOOSING TO SLOW DOWN INSTEAD
OF ALWAYS LEANING INTO THE
BUSYNESS OF LIFE.

One of the most well-known Bible stories highlights this principle very clearly.

Read the story of Martha and Mary in Luke 10:38-42 and consider how you relate with the questions below:

- What is Martha most worried about?
- What is Mary doing in this passage? How is Mary described?
- What is Jesus' response to Martha?
- When you reflect on your life, how can you spend more time at the feet of Jesus?

READ MARK 6:30-31, THEN IN YOUR JOURNAL SPEND A FEW MINUTES REFLECTING ON JESUS' WORDS.



How do Jesus' words apply to my life this week and this month?

What would it mean for me to hear Jesus tell me to come spend time with him and get rest?

What work must be completed so I can rest, without guilt, in the life and work of Jesus?

HISTORY TELLS US



CHICK-FIL-A IS KNOWN FOR ITS COW MASCOTS AND BEING CLOSED ON SUNDAYS. FORMER CEO, TRUETT CATHY, RECALLS IN HIS BOOK EAT MOR CHIKIN: INSPIRE MORE PEOPLE THAT WHEN HE AND HIS BROTHER, BEN, OPENED THEIR FIRST RESTAURANT IN 1946, THEY CLOSED THEIR FIRST SUNDAY TO HONOR GOD. PERHAPS THAT WAS AN EASIER DECISION IN 1946, BUT WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS TODAY?

According to “24/7 Wallstreet,” it was estimated that in 2019, Chick-fil-A was losing \$1.2 billion annually by remaining closed on Sundays. Imagine what that number is now, five years later. For any business person, that untapped profit is hard to swallow.

What has a closed Sunday done for their employees and their business holistically? You may have noticed that when you pull through the Chick-fil-A drive-through, their employees are happy, smiling, and patient. When you ask for a third modification to your order and request another dipping sauce, they are known for responding with “my pleasure.” It is such a common phrase of the Chick-fil-A employees that their accommodating attitudes are sometimes used as comedic stunts.

Are their employees generally happy solely because they are closed on Sundays? Of course not. But they continue to close their doors to honor God and his faithfulness in their business and provide one day a week where everyone in the restaurants is guaranteed rest from their labor. There is no such thing as a seven day work week at Chick-fil-A.

**What would it mean
for you to adopt
the same mindset
and know you, too,
deserve rest
from your labor?**

**“HOW WE SPEND OUR DAYS IS, OF COURSE,
HOW WE SPEND OUR LIVES. WHAT WE DO
WITH THIS HOUR, AND THAT ONE, IS WHAT
WE ARE DOING.”**

**ANNIE DILLARD
THE WRITING LIFE**

WHAT DOES IT REALLY TAKE TO BUILD A NEW HABIT?

According to Harvard Business Review, around half of our daily actions are driven by repetition. These repetitions, or habits, are behaviors that are done with little thought, and these are easy to repeat when they bring us immediate and undeniable joy.

But what about developing habits that do not come as quickly?

To develop habits within our behavior that do not automatically exist, we must create routines involving frequent and intentional behaviors. A behavior must be a regularly performed routine before it can become a habit.

To attempt to turn an intentional routine into a habit, slow down and consider the following:

SET YOUR INTENTIONS.

Change takes time, and positive change often takes intention. Be honest with God about your changes and invite him into the process.

PREPARE FOR ROADBLOCKS.

No change is easy. Forming a habit takes work. There will undoubtedly be things (schedules, kids, activities, sickness, celebrations) that get you off track. Embrace them. Do not spend energy fighting them. Instead, prepare yourself mentally so that creating a habit and inviting change into your life accommodates for roadblocks that are right around the corner. Perseverance is key to any positive change you seek.

TIE YOUR ROUTINE INTO A REWARD.

If you seek to form a difficult or tedious habit, it is advantageous to tie the intentional behaviors to rewards. What can you do that will feel like a reward when you take the steps toward forming a habit?

LEARN MORE ABOUT CREATING YOUR OWN HABITS.

Justin Whitmel Earley is a lawyer, dad, husband, and follower of Jesus. A few years ago, he was awakened in the middle of the night by an intense feeling that something was wrong. Days later, when the feeling finally landed him in the emergency room, he was experiencing symptoms of clinical anxiety and panic attacks. Despite his acknowledgment that, generally, everything was going really well, his body and his mind were suffering under the stress of everyday life.

This reality set him on a path to learn how to incorporate spiritual habits that allowed rest to enter his reality. Today, he is the bestselling author of *The Common Rule: Habits of Purpose for an Age of Distraction*, outlining his efforts to create and maintain a habit in life. Perhaps consider reading about his habit formation experience during your Sabbath this month to learn more about how you can create a habit of rest in your life.

HELPFUL HINTS TO PLAN YOUR SABBATH

START SMALL.

We have established that Sabbath was designed for you; it is not meant to feel like “one more thing.” If the practice begins to feel overwhelming, you have gone too far. Consider taking a nap as a starting point. Yes, that is a tangible way to practice Sabbath! This is an invitation to create a free space for you to be present with God and those around you.

SABBATH IS A GIFT.

Practicing holy rest is a way to resist the worldly idea that production is the measure of success. Remind your soul that your production does not drive your worth.

Heschel says we need the Sabbath to survive civilization:

“GALLANTLY, CEASELESSLY, QUIETLY, MAN MUST FIGHT FOR INNER LIBERTY” TO REMAIN INDEPENDENT OF THE ENSLAVEMENT OF THE MATERIAL WORLD. INNER LIBERTY DEPENDS UPON BEING EXEMPT FROM DOMINATION OF THINGS AS WELL AS FROM DOMINATION OF PEOPLE. THERE ARE MANY WHO HAVE ACQUIRED A HIGH DEGREE OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL LIBERTY, BUT ONLY VERY FEW ARE NOT ENSLAVED TO THINGS. THIS IS OUR CONSTANT PROBLEM—HOW TO LIVE WITH PEOPLE AND REMAIN FREE, HOW TO LIVE WITH THINGS AND REMAIN INDEPENDENT.”

ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL
AUTHOR OF [THE SABBATH](#)

WORK TOWARDS CREATING A WEEKLY RHYTHM.

Once you create margin for rest throughout your week, you will notice how you look forward to the scheduled rest. As you progress this month, and if you can reach further, see if you can create a rhythm of rest, thereby establishing a consistency you can rely on to sustain your week.

PRACTICE

There is no legalism here. In the words of Jesus, “The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath” (Mark 2:27). Find what works for you, your schedule, and your family.

Simply put, pick a time to rest and value that time. Release the guilt of “should have” or “should be doing” to know that this is as necessary as the work waiting for you.

If you meet with an Overflow Group this month, you will spend some time in your group looking at your schedule, making a list of what could be subtracted, and determining how you can create the margin to rest. Be intentional with your time this month.

The ways in which we practice rest in our lives are nearly endless. Ask the Lord what he is inviting you to experience this month.

For more ideas on how you can begin your journey into Sabbath, see Page 22.

GROUP PRACTICE



THIS MONTH IS ABOUT PRACTICING
REST AND PRESENCE. WHEN YOU
BEGIN TO REFLECT TOGETHER,
REMEMBER THE INVITATION OF THIS
PRACTICE IS ONE OF SUBTRACTION,
NOT ADDITION.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO PRACTICE
SABBATH AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND WITH
A GROUP. THE NEXT PAGE SHOWS
A SUGGESTION OF HOW YOU CAN
STRUCTURE YOUR GROUP TIME THIS
MONTH. FEEL FREE TO ADJUST IT
TO FIT YOUR GROUP BEST. OR, IF YOU
ARE NOT IN AN OVERFLOW GROUP,
THINK CREATIVELY ABOUT CREATING
SPACE THIS MONTH FOR YOUR FAMILY
OR GROUP OF FRIENDS TO GATHER IN
A SIMILAR FASHION.

SET YOUR INTENTIONS.

Open the gathering in prayer. Invite God into your group time and ask his presence to be in the fellowship and discussion.



Begin group time by watching the Introduction video. Scan the QR code to watch. Be sure to pause and reflect on last month's practice of prayer before moving on.

REFLECTIONS:



Has prayer been a more centralized focus in our lives this month than in previous months?



Has anyone seen prayers answered this month?



What has the prayer practice been like for you?
How has it shaped your relationship with God?



After reflection, continue by viewing the Sabbath Teaching video with your group.

If you have not already, take 10 minutes to map out your week. If you are meeting with your Overflow Group on a Sunday evening, this is a straightforward look at your week. If you are meeting during the week, look forward to the next seven days and write your schedule in your Overflow Journal.

REFLECT WITH YOUR GROUP.

Is there any margin in your upcoming week? If so, what do you like to do most with your time?

Is there intentional time spent resting during your week?

Below is a list of possible actions you can take this month to help create space for rest. Some require more time, so be realistic and start where you can.

PRACTICING SABBATH

Pick one or two to practice this upcoming week:

- 1//** Turn off your phone for an afternoon or set period.
- 2//** Step away from social media (or whatever app on your phone that tends to consume much of your absent-minded time) for a few days.
- 3//** Take a walk without noise (no music, podcasts, etc.)
- 4//** Read a book, especially scripture.
- 5//** Take a nap (*yes, this counts!*).
- 6//** Spend time alone with God.

Now, take the next few minutes to review the weekly activities you listed in your Overflow Journal. Ask God where you can create space in your schedule this week to rest and delight in him. Circle or highlight where you can find the margin you seek and schedule it in your week.



Tip: Feel free to value the rest the Lord has gifted you by scheduling rest on your calendar. Consider starting with 10 minutes a day or allot a chunk of time in your week; either way, be intentional about centering your time and your worth in God instead of the world.

Make a list with your group and discuss some of the things in your schedule that could be eliminated to experience rest. Remember, this practice is about subtraction, not addition.

Conclude group time by sharing how you plan to incorporate rest into your schedule.

// OVERFLOW // FAMILIES

LIVING WATER FOR AN EMPTY AGE

SABBATH PRACTICES FOR FAMILIES.

Sabbath holds a promise of renewal and joy, a treasure within our busy lives. It's not merely a pause but an intentional effort dedicated to enriching our relationship with God and each other.



PICK A DAY

Choose a day and time that aligns with everyone's needs. While Saturday or Sunday is traditional, consider a midweek evening.



START SMALL

Begin with a manageable commitment, like a tech-free dinner. This will set a tone of presence that builds a foundation for a more enriched Sabbath experience over time.



CREATE UNITY

Incorporate everyone's idea by rotating who gets to choose the weekly Sabbath activity. You might begin with homemade milkshakes that the entire family anticipates.



EMBRACE FLEXIBILITY

Extend an invitation to friends or family, thereby sharing the happiness of your tradition with others who you love and enjoy spending time with.



CRAFT TRADITIONS

Integrate a family hobby such as pickleball, gardening, hiking, movie night, painting, or baking into your Sabbath.

Make spending time together fun!

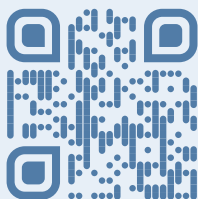


CELEBRATE TOGETHERNESS

Subtract the distractions and embrace the core values of connection, rest, and renewal with God and those you love.

As you do, you'll find that Sabbath becomes a cherished and rejuvenating practice, a blessing of togetherness in a fast-paced world.

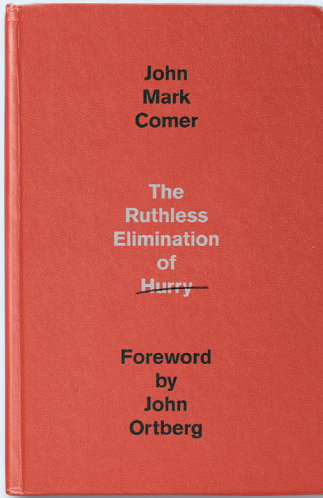
Each month, our Family Ministry team will provide resources for your family to experience these practices in your home.



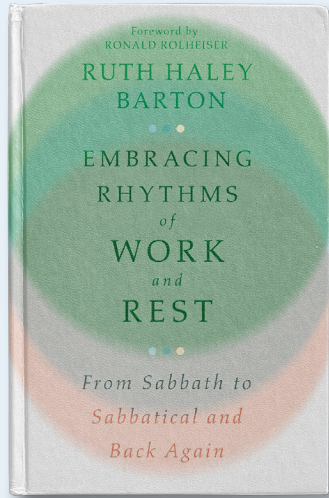
Scan the QR code to watch members from our team help you as you continue to discern what this practice could look like in your family.

RESOURCES

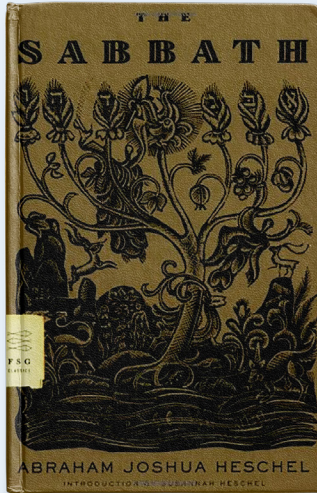
Want to go deeper in Sabbath Practice? Consider reading one of the suggested resources below:



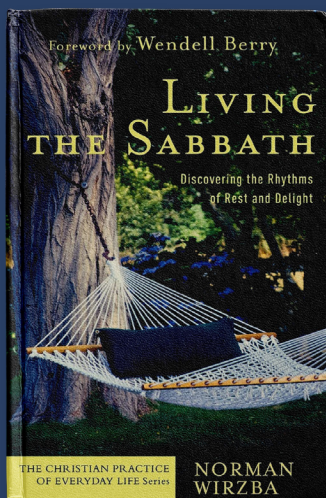
**THE RUTHLESS
ELIMINATION OF HURRY**
John Mark Comer



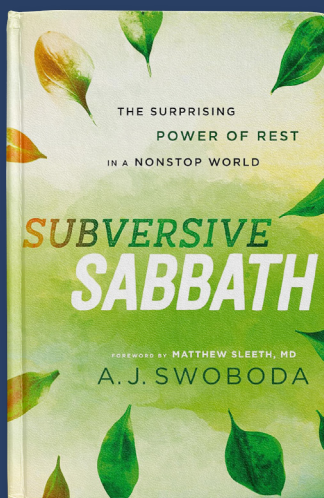
**EMBRACING RHYTHMS
OF WORK AND REST**
Ruth Haley Barton



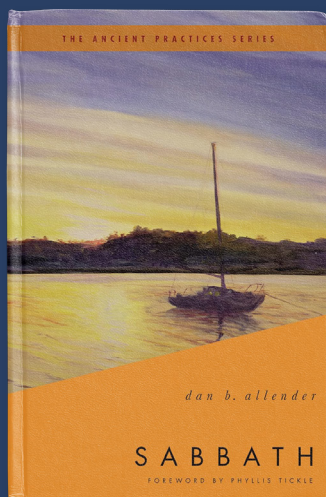
THE SABBATH
Abraham Joshua Heschel



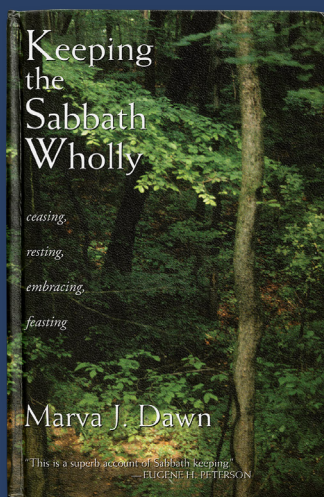
LIVING THE SABBATH
Norman Wirzba



SUBVERSIVE SABBATH
A. J. Swoboda



SABBATH
Dan B. Allender



KEEPING THE SABBATH WHOLLY
Marva J. Dawn

SABBATH BLESSING



MAY THIS DAY BRING SABBATH REST
TO MY HEART AND MY HOME.
MAY GOD'S IMAGE IN ME BE RESTORED,
AND MY IMAGINATION IN GOD BE RE-STORIED.
MAY THE GRAVITY OF MATERIAL THINGS BE LIGHTENED,
AND THE RELATIVITY OF TIME SLOW DOWN.
MAY I KNOW GRACE TO EMBRACE MY OWN
FINITE SMALLNESS IN THE ARMS
OF GOD'S INFINITE GREATNESS.
MAY GOD'S WORD FEED ME AND HIS SPIRIT
LEAD ME INTO THE WEEK AND LIFE TO COME.

WRITTEN BY PETE GREIG
24-7 PRAYER



PEACHTREE
CHURCH