

SABBATH Study Guide
Created by Deryl Davis
Journey Films
4.3.23

***SABBATH* STUDY GUIDE**

Questions to Consider

1. Having watched the film, which aspects of Sabbath do you think are most important – OR appeal most to you?
2. Did you grow up in a Sabbath tradition? If so, what did it entail? How important was that tradition in your family?
3. If you did not grow up in a Sabbath tradition, what are your thoughts about Sabbath after viewing the film? Are you encouraged to take up a Sabbath tradition or specific Sabbath practices? If so, which ones?
4. Do you think of Sabbath primarily as a religious practice? Is it possible to practice Sabbath or aspects of it outside of any religious tradition? Why or why not?
5. The film explores a number of Sabbath traditions within Judaism and Christianity, as well as related practices within Islam (the Friday Jummah prayers). Which traditions or practices stood out to you? Why? Can you list two or three things you learned about Sabbath traditions in the course of the film?
6. How has watching the film impacted your own thinking about Sabbath? Are you encouraged to take up a specific practice or to join a particular Sabbath tradition?
7. Are there aspects of other Sabbath traditions that you admire? If so, which ones?
8. Commentators in the film talk about aspects of Sabbath related to justice---workers' rights, a living wage that allows workers to take a Sabbath day of rest, and other concerns. Have you thought about Sabbath in this light before? How does this approach to Sabbath influence your own thinking about what Sabbath is or means?
9. Commentators also speak about the connection between Sabbath and creation, in terms of environmental justice and of how we engage with the land. Have you thought about this aspect of Sabbath before---that Sabbath may apply to the earth, as well as to the people on it? How does this approach influence your own thinking about Sabbath? Your own practices,

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related to the environment? Are there changes you would make in terms of your own relationship to the earth?

10. In the film, we see many examples of Sabbath as a communal practice or event---people joining in communal worship, communal meals, times of sharing, etc. Do you typically think of Sabbath as something done or practiced in community? How important do you think the communal aspect of Sabbath is? Given divisions within our culture today, could Sabbath practice be a means of bringing people together across different political, social, economic, and other lines?
11. The film also emphasizes the experiential aspect of Sabbath---prayer, contemplation, ritual, silence, study, and serving others, among other things. Which of these experiential aspects of Sabbath have you practiced? Which are new to you? How important to you is the experiential aspect of Sabbath, as opposed to its social or formally religious aspects?

Some Suggested Practices

1. Attend a weekly worship service.
2. Dedicate one day per month as a “tech Sabbath,” in which you refrain from the use of technology.
3. Dedicate one Sabbath day per month in which you do no work and instead spend time in reading, reflection, or gathering with family and friends.
4. Experiment with a new devotional practice, such as as lectio divina, contemplative prayer, or meditation. You can find brief descriptions of these and other practices at the website of the Center for Action and Contemplation, founded by contemplative Richard Rohr, at <https://cac.org/about/what-is-contemplation/>.
5. Host a communal meal for friends, family, or new acquaintances. (Our partner OneTable has extensive online resources for hosting traditional Jewish Friday Shabbat dinners: <https://onetable.org/resource-library/>. These resources can be adapted for hosting dinners of other kinds not strictly related to a specific religious tradition.)
6. Dedicate a Sabbath day a month to serving others in your community. For ideas, visit our Partner the Unplug Collaborative at <https://www.unplugcollaborative.org/unplug-what-to-do-collection>. While these suggestions are specific to unplugging from technology, they can be adapted for any Sabbath observance.

Some Suggested Readings

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Glick Yoel. *Living the Life of Jewish Meditation : A Comprehensive Guide to Practice and Experience*. Jewish Lights Publishing 2014.

Heschel Abraham Joshua. *The Sabbath : Its Meaning for Modern Man*. Farrar Straus and Giroux 2005.

Oden Amy. *Right Here Right Now: The Practice of Christian Mindfulness*. Abingdon Press 2017.

Rohr Richard. *Everything Belongs : The Gift of Contemplative Prayer*. Crossroad Pub 1999.

Shulevitz Judith. *The Sabbath World : Glimpses of a Different Order of Time*. 1st ed. Random House 2010.

Tonstad Sigve. *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day*. Andrews University Press 2009.

Trent J. Dana. *For Sabbath's Sake : Embracing Your Need for Rest Worship and Community*. Upper Room Books 2017.

Wirzba Norman. *Living the Sabbath : Discovering the Rhythms of Rest and Delight*. Brazos Press 2006.