

*SABBATH* Retreat Template  
Deryl Davis  
Journey Films 2023

## ***SABBATH: AN ANCIENT PRACTICE MEETS THE MODERN WORLD***

### **RETREAT TEMPLATE**

We hope that you and your organization or retreat center will consider hosting a retreat on the important topic of Sabbath. The *SABBATH* film and film guides can provide a structure for such a retreat and support you in your planning.

We suggest showing the film (or, if time is limited, one of the single-hour segments or a series of video clips from the film) and using one of the film guides as a tool for discussion. The guides will lead you through major themes of the film, including the relationship between Sabbath and rest, worship and ritual, social justice, care for the earth, and community. You could spend many hours responding to individual questions from the guides, so choose the topics and questions that are most relevant for you and your group and which may elicit the most helpful conversations.

Below is a suggested structure for a weekend retreat running Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. It may be adapted for a single-day session.

### **Covenant**

We suggest that you and your group agree to the following covenants:

1. To refrain from the use of technology throughout the retreat
2. To refrain from unnecessary material consumption (i.e. shopping or purchasing anything other than necessary goods) during the course of the retreat.

### **Retreat Elements**

We suggest that your retreat include some or all of the following elements, important to the idea of Sabbath:

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1. Time for rest and inactivity
2. Time for structured and unstructured prayer, contemplation, and reflection (suggestions and links to resources are provided in the film guides)
3. Time for community engagement and discussion
4. One or more communal meals
5. A communal activity related to one or more of the major themes of Sabbath---worship, social justice, care for the environment/engagement with the earth, study
6. A time of engagement with the scriptural bases of Sabbath practice (recommended scripture passages listed below)
7. An act of service related to Sabbath (i.e. preparing and serving a meal, helping a neighbor with a chore, cleaning up a park or public space, inviting a new acquaintance to a meal or communal activity, etc.)
8. One or more creative components, such as writing and journaling, drawing or painting, singing together, or other activities
9. Time in nature and the outdoors, such as a group hike, garden pruning and clean up, planting something together, or enjoying a nature trail
10. Encourage participants to create their own Sabbath plan to share with the group
11. A concluding ritual or time of sharing

### **Topics for Discussion**

The film guides include many questions for discussion related to a number themes and ideas connected to Sabbath and Sabbath practices. Below are just a few questions and ideas that you and your group might consider in the course of a retreat.

1. How do you define Sabbath, and what is your experience of it?
2. Do you think Sabbath and its practices could be a means of addressing current societal pressures, such as overwork, exhaustion, and inattention? In what ways?
3. How has viewing the film changed your thoughts about what Sabbath is or how it might be practiced?

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4. Which Sabbath traditions and practices speak most directly to you, and why?
5. Do you think Sabbath practices can have a practical effect on society, or are they simply about personal spiritual growth?
6. How might Sabbath practices be used to address injustices related to people, economic and political systems, the earth?
7. What sorts of acts of service are related to Sabbath, and how can you engage in some of them?
8. What are your plans for practicing Sabbath going forward? What will your future Sabbath practice look like?

### Scriptures related to Sabbath

Gen 2:2-3,

Exodus 20:8-11;

Exodus 31:12-17

Leviticus 23:3

Deuteronomy 5:12-14

Isaiah 58:13-14

Ezekiel 20:19-20

Mark 2:23-28

Some of the above ideas are adapted from or inspired by *Right Here, Right Now: The Practice of Christian Mindfulness* by Amy G. Oden (Abingdon Press) and *For Sabbath's Sake: Embracing Your Need for Rest, Worship, and Community* by J. Dana Trent (Upper Room Books, 2017).