

Sabbath

THE MUDHOUSE

Lauren Winners grew up in an orthodox Jewish household. During college she converted to Christianity. Her understanding is that Christianity is about belief, but Judaism is about action. She felt she was missing something. So, at a coffee shop, The Mudhouse, she began writing down some of those actions that give her life meaning. In this book she shares some disciplines that enrich her faith. Once these disciplines become a part of life and are repeated again and again, they become a part of who you are... they begin to shape your soul. I will be talking about some practices through these 6 weeks of Lent: keeping the Sabbath, how we treat our bodies, hospitality, and lighting of candles... And I will be encouraging you to incorporate these practices into your daily lives.

(Much of this sermon comes from the book SABBATH by Wayne Muller)

Gracious God may these words, be your words of grace. Amen

There is a story about a man traveling through the rainforest. His guides would stop often and rest. After a while he got really frustrated and asked why they had to stop so often. Their reply? - We have to slow down to give our souls enough time to catch up with our bodies.

There was an abbey of sisters who were beginning a farm and they would let their cattle roam all over their land. Their land was getting beat up pretty quickly and they had to increase their feed, when instead, they had wanted grass fed cattle. Someone gave them, good old fashioned, farming- good- sense advice- Fence off part of the land for the cattle and let the rest of the land rest. It was transformational. The land that rested, not only came back, herbs began to grow that they had never seen before... seed that had remained dormant because they had been trampled. The land, we, our world needs a time of rest, in order to create.

But, we live in a world that believes in living life in the fast lane. We don't seem to have time for rest and relaxation. Even our relationships suffer because our down time is not really down time. In the 1950, when the tip of the iceberg of the future with technology was being seen, it was predicted that eventually folks would only have to work 20- 30 hours a week to accomplish the same. The focus would become on quality relationships and time with family. But, instead we decided to faster and faster and accomplish more and more without thinking about how it affects our families. When we ask families often how their doing, the # 1 answer is usually BUSY.

The scripture's story about creation says that God created the world in 6 days and on the 7th day, God rested. I have always pondered why God would need to rest. God, of unending energy and abounding love. How would God need rest? But, if you look at the original language, God rested, was refreshed or exhaled. God exhaled- sitting back and enjoying the creation that moved before God. God has been asking us the exhale ever since. Take time, setting time a part, for us to savor the blessings, joy and delight of God.

When God calls us to stop and recognize the Sabbath, God isn't asking us to fold our hands and take a time – out as a child that is being punished. God is asking us to clear out all the to- do lists, all the worries, all the ifs and buts from our lives and savor , breathe deeply, exhale , relax, laugh, play and enjoy the spirit of God's grace.

In MUDHOUSE SABBATH, Lauren Winners describes, what Shabbat was like for some of her friends. (pg. 1 and 3 of Mudhouse Sabbath)

You see we most often see Sabbath as a day to go to church on the morning, stare at our watches and make sure the pastor doesn't preach too long, and then begin the schedule of the race of the sporting events, or recitals, or the errands that need to be done before Monday. It is usually not a

time of rest. It is usually a day of huffing and puffing, not exhaling. And YET, if we actually took those 24 hours to rest, we would be more insightful, wise, in tune with God's beauty. We would actually exhale. We would savor God's world. I have heard it described as learning to walk through the world as if you are walking with a 2 year old. Do you remember what that was like? Every 2 seconds, you stop because the child is mesmerized by something new. A pebble, a leaf, the color of a marble... takes investigation and joy and delight. And that is what Sabbath is- a way of resting so that you find delight in the world around you.... The world that God creates. From the book SABBATH- Here are some ideas:

a. Sabbath box- When Sabbath would begin, there is a box by the door, and everyone puts their devices- cell phones, I pods, I pads, a card with a to do list or worry list that they were going to set aside. They would turn off the world for 24 hours.

b.Silent hike

- For those who love to cook (that is not me)- Take time to make a meal for people you love, smelling the spices, tasting the sauces, listening to music... no time line, just sheer joy of the event of cooking.
- At our grandmother's home , it would always be a huge family meal and then a whole afternoon of playing cro cay... and racing after lightening bugs in the evening... telling stories and taking naps.
- Inviting friends and family over to listen to music and dance and relax together.
- If you don't have a whole day, have Sabbath moments during the week, in which you take a silent walk, pray, or meditate.

God is waiting for you to exhale, my brothers and sisters, it is Lent... let us begin