

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church



Weekly Sermon Series

Taking Root: The Gospel Rules ... Keeping Sabbath Exodus 20:8-11; Luke 6:6-11

It is amazing what a few hours of sleep can do. A person can be completely physically exhausted after a day of cleaning up the yard, trimming the trees and bushes, and bagging up or binding up the yard waste. Yet a little food, a nice warm shower, and a night's sleep produces a refreshed body ready for another day. The muscles are relaxed and strong again. The skin and bruises or scrapes are beginning to show healing. The heart and lungs are full of energy and working smoothly. Only God could have created such a human being that is able to feel like new again with the free gift of rest, of daily renewal.

The plan seems so simple. Balance work and rest. Utilize your time wisely, then take a break. But it is one of the hardest for we humans to follow. And keeping Sabbath seems even harder for the world. God created one day out of seven for Sabbath. It is the perfect day to honor and worship God; not that we leave out honor for God other days. But this is an entire "holy day." There are many ways to keep it holy. We can gather in Christian community and praise God. We can celebrate family and receive the blessing of an activity together, nurturing each other's spirit. We can spend time outside in the very nature that God created for us. We can take time apart from the busyness of our world and be still. We can use our skills or talents to make someone else happy.

We can be free from our usual schedule and open to whatever God places in our path. Sometimes an opportunity comes along to keep a Sabbath on a different day than number seven, perhaps sooner than the end of the week. Whatever we declare to be our Sabbath day, we must strive to keep it, and not let our spirit, mind, and body be robbed of this holy occasion.

The benefits are numerous, both for us and for God.

What stops us from keeping Sabbath?

What are some positive changes that we can effect?

List ways you have kept Sabbath in the past month.

Is there someone that you can invite to keep Sabbath with you?

Lord, your plan for balance and rest began in Genesis, in the beginning. Stir in my heart the desire to make holy the Sabbath in my life. Make my connection to you strong and abiding. In your holy name. Amen.

-- Week of May 31, 2009