

Weekly Devotional | March 13-19, 2022

Prepare: Position for More



Introduction

The only pure motive for our spiritual disciplines is the motive of loving obedience to God. This series will help us build rhythmic practices in which the Spirit of God leads us as we journey toward wholeness in Christ. By engaging in these rhythms, we POSITION ourselves for the MORE from God. These practices will be intentional daily rhythms as well as a renewed weekly rhythm of Sabbath.

If we are to progress in our spiritual journey so that the disciplines are a blessing and not a curse, we come to the place in our lives where we can lay down the everlasting burden of almost needing to manage others. This drive, more than any single thing, will lead us to turn the spiritual disciplines into laws. Once we have made a law, we have an “externalism” by which we judge who is measuring up and who is not. Without the laws, the disciplines are primarily an internal work and it is impossible to control an internal work. When we genuinely believe that inner transformation is God’s work and not ours, we can put to rest our passion to set others straight.

- Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline

These disciplines become a rhythm of stopping, resting, delighting, and reflecting in the presence of God in the “secret places” of our lives. You may find that you gravitate to certain disciplines or practices. This series is designed for you to explore how you best rest in the presence of God. Visit stonecrestchurch.com/prepare for more resources in addition to each weekly devotional guide.

Weekly Structure

The weekly devotional will be structured with the following. You may want to use this devotional as a journal or use one along each day.

- ❖ Day 1 — Sunday discovery guide of the worship service, designed to process with your spiritual community/transformative relationships/group
- ❖ Day 2-6 — Daily devotionals for yourself
- ❖ Day 7 — Sabbath reflection

DAY 1: MARCH 13

Discovery Guide - Rhythms: Stillness, Sabbath, Spiritual Community

- How was the Lord speaking to you while you were singing/listening?
- Are spiritual rhythms something you are familiar with or not?
- What has your experience with rhythms been like?
- Has anything changed in your perspective of Sabbath?
- Do you feel Sabbath is something realistic for you? Why or why not?
- What are the blockages that you sense will get in the way of you engaging into rhythm?
- What are the breakthroughs in which you need Jesus to show up?
- What blessings have you experienced from stillness, Sabbath, or spiritual community?

DAY 2: MARCH 14

Daily Rhythms

Stop: Begin your time with God in 2 minutes of silence.

Rest and receive: Psalm 42:1-2

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?”

Our world continues on, faster and busier, and we are reminded that our souls were not created for the kind of speed to which we have grown accustomed. Thus, we are a people who are out of rhythm, a people with too much to do and not enough time to do it.

Our lives can easily take us to the brink of burnout. The pace we live at is often destructive. The lack of margin is debilitating. We are worn out. In all of this, the problem before us is not just the frenetic pace we live at but what gets pushed out from our lives as a result; that is, life with God. Educator and activist Parker Palmer makes a compelling case that burnout typically does not come about because we've given so much of ourselves that we have nothing left. He tells us, “It merely reveals the nothingness from which I was trying to give in the first place.” (Rich Villodas, *Deeply Formed Life*)

What would it look like if we experienced life at a different pace? What does rhythm look like where we are deeply connected to God and not overwhelmed with hurry and feeling tired? We look to the Lord for a daily rhythm in which we can spend time with Him every day. What would it look like for you? Start with 15 minutes a day. Let the Lord reveal to you when...morning, mid-day, evening?

Reflect:

What barriers get in the way of a daily rhythm with the Lord? Ask Jesus to break through and release a blessing of creativity in this establishment of rhythm in your life.

Pause to listen to what the Lord is saying to you.

Pray.

DAY 3: MARCH 15

Sabbath

Stop: Begin your time with God in 2 minutes of silence.

Rest and receive: Hebrews 4:9-11 NIV

“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.”

Develop a rhythm of setting apart one twenty-four-hour period each week. Most of us work a five-day week but need another day for doing the activities of life that are “work” for us. That might include paying bills, fixing your car, working on your house or apartment, or finishing your homework if you are a student. What will it mean for you to stop and rest rather than use this as one more day to “get things done”? Trust God to run the universe without you. Begin to look at your weeks as preparing for Sabbath! Ask yourself, “What kinds of activities bring me joy and delight? What truly replenishes me?” Take a nap. Enjoy God. Do something totally different from your work. (Pete Scazzero, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality)

Include your sleep as a part of your 24 hours of rest. You could also consider a 5pm-5pm period of time...whatever works best for you. If there are others in your household, plan with them to help them also observe Sabbath and rest. You will reflect on your Sabbath at the end of the week.

Reflect:

Do you feel a barrier to Sabbath? What breakthroughs do you need from Jesus to receive this blessing of rest?

Pause to listen to what the Lord is saying to you. **Pray.**

DAY 4: MARCH 16

Silence and Stillness

Stop: Begin your time with God in 2 minutes of silence.

Rest and receive: Psalm 62:5 ESV

“For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.”

Silence is the deep inner reversal of that grasping, controlling mode of being that is characterized in culture. Without silence, these cultural habits will attach themselves to our spiritual disciplines. The disciplines will become objects we employ in an attempt to produce our own transformation or in an attempt to manipulate God to bring about the changes we have decided are needed, or in an attempt to impress others with our spirituality. Silence is the inner act of letting go. It brings us to a point of relinquishing to God our control of our relationship with Him.

In silence and stillness, we let go of our manipulative control. In solitude, we acknowledge who we are to ourselves and to God. Our time with Him then becomes an offering of who we are to Him— the giving of that broken, unclean, grasping, manipulative self to God for the work of God’s grace in our lives.

Reflect:

What barriers do you experience when you enter into silence with the Lord? Ask Jesus for the breakthrough you need to experience the blessing of silence and stillness in your life.

Pause to listen to what the Lord is saying to you.

Pray.

DAY 5: MARCH 17

Spiritual Community

Stop: Begin your time with God in 2 minutes of silence.

Rest and receive: 1 John 1:5-7

“This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”

Life change occurs in an environment of true community. In true community, people live open, honest, and confessional lives in a culture of grace. There is no hiding or pretending. Secrets are toxic to the wellbeing of the soul. If you are going to experience breakthroughs, then you must resolve to live confessional lives with no secrets.

We have to live in the light with God and others. We have to be vulnerable with our own shortcomings. And we have to allow the grace of Jesus to penetrate and permeate our own hearts so we can extend his grace to those who come out of the darkness into the light. As followers of Jesus, we must all choose to live in the light with God and others. Only light can set us free from darkness. No one ever discovers ultimate freedom by protecting dark corners of secrecy in their soul. Even if this is not part of your current church family, you can create a small group of people who will live this way with you.

(Rob Reimer, Soul Care: 7 Transformational Principles for a Healthy Soul)

Reflect:

What barriers do you face in finding true community? Ask Jesus to break through these barriers as you seek to be a blessing to others and to receive from the Lord.

Pray.

DAY 6: MARCH 18

Gratitude and Thanksgiving

Stop: Begin your time with God in 2 minutes of silence.

Rest and receive: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

Giving thanks in all circumstances makes room for the more of God. What would it look like for you to make gratitude and thanksgiving a posture and response you live from daily—instead of worry, disappointment, or anger? Living out of a heart of thanksgiving is an ongoing choice because it is not natural! However, it renews our mind with things of God, allowing us to see and experience Him in and out of life. We can live more empowered, filled with joy, hope, and peace. As we spend time in and out of the secret place, may we be a people who know His character more deeply.

What does He feel like? What does He sound like? He is always near, never far— He is far too close to miss. What sights, smells, tastes, sounds, or people can you thank God for? He is worthy of your praise.

Scripture tells us to enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Today, begin and “enter” your day listing three things you are thanking the Lord for and express your gratitude to Him. Say a prayer of gratitude, write or sing your own song of praise to the Father, stand and dance freely, or thank Him however you feel led.

Reflect:

What barriers are keeping you from having a heart of thanksgiving in this season? Ask the Lord to open your eyes and heart to His goodness and put a new song in your mouth (Psalm 40:3). Pause to listen to what the Lord is saying to you. **Pray.**

DAY 7: MARCH 19

Your Sabbath - Reflect on your 24 hours of rest

What did you do on your Sabbath? Why?

What was life giving on your Sabbath? What was not life-giving?

What could you shift for your next Sabbath?

What did you sense from the Lord during your day of rest?

