

The Power of Rest- from Sabbath to Sabbaticals

Workshop for The Midwest Presbytery -EPC

February 2023

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Power of Rest

B. The Need for Rest

C. The Pattern for Rest

1. Scripture gives us two primary opportunities
2. Weekly Sabbath
3. The Gift of Sabbaticals.
4. It is from this gift of a Sabbath Year that the concept of sabbaticals for those in ministry life has come.

II. Begin with the Objections

A. Resistance occurs on both sides of the table

1. Common responses:
 - a. "I don't get a sabbatical why should he get one? He needs to work harder to make the church grow!"
 - b. "He/she will candidate or plan to leave while on sabbatical!"
 - c. "I am too valuable and indispensable to people and the work of the church." And "They will replace me while I am gone!"

III. Why are Sabbaticals important and valuable

A. Sabbaticals are important for pastors – and any person -because:

1. Sabbaticals provide physical, spiritual, emotional, mental, and relational renewal
2. They are an extended remembrance that Jesus is Lord of our life and ministry.
3. We need time and space to ask the right questions about ourselves and our lives.

4. Rest and leisure are not the same
5. Knowing that the church can survive without you - that God is actually in control - frees us.
 - a. The Weight of Ministry life.
 - b. The effect on our bodies when we don't stop and rest.
6. Jesus asks the fundamentally important question

B. Sabbaticals are valuable for the church

1. God is in control, and he will care for us.
2. It is a long-term investment in the life of your pastor and their family
3. Churches can become less pastor centric.
4. A well-planned Sabbatical will prepare our pastor for the next season in ministry.
5. A building block in cultivating a culture of ministry health in the church.

C. The Danger of ignoring the importance and value of sabbaticals.

IV. Let's Talk Planning

A. There's never a good time to go on a sabbatical.

B. Good planning makes for a good sabbatical – pastor and elders together

1. In advance is best.
2. Timeframe
3. Finances
4. Church leadership
5. Church engagement
6. Accountability
7. Family
8. Communication

9. Structure

10. Re-entry

C. A Suggested Format

1. *Pre-sabbatical* (2 weeks prior)
2. *Dis-engage* (weeks 1 -2)
3. *Decelerate* (weeks 3 - 5)
4. *Discernment* (weeks 6 – 9)
5. *Determine* (weeks 9 – 10)
6. *Debrief* (weeks 11 -12)
7. *Re-entry* (2 weeks post-sabbatical)

V. Next Steps

VI. Conclusion

- A. Living into a healthy pattern of work and rest may be one of the most counter-cultural things you can do.
- B. We may need to see that we are behind the curve when it comes to understanding the power of rest. Corporate America.
- C. We cannot ignore God's invitation to stop and remember that He is God. Rest-Sabbath and Sabbaticals are His gift to us – to right-size us and re-orient us to a truly human life.
- D. The prophets tell us the story of the danger of ignoring this