



Emotionally Healthy Spirituality

Discover the Rhythms of Daily Office and Sabbath Part 6 — Daniel 6:6-13

Many of us are eager to develop our relationship with God. The problem, however, is that we can't seem to stop long enough to be *with* Him. And if we aren't busy, we feel guilty that we're wasting time and not being productive. It is like being addicted – not to drugs or alcohol – but to tasks, work and doing.

The Rhythms of Daily office and Sabbath offer us a way to deeply root our lives in Him. These two ancient disciplines go back thousands of years, yet when placed inside present-day culture offer us a counter-cultural alternative to the fast pace of modern life.

After being forcibly removed from his country and home, Daniel was given a prestigious education and high-level job in government. The pressure on him to conform to the values of Babylon was great.

Read Daniel 6:6-13

1. What spoke to you?
2. How did Daniel's practice of praying three times a day help him to resist the great pressure he was facing from Babylon?
3. What did it cost Daniel?
4. What are the greatest obstacles preventing you from stopping to be with God two or three times a day?

The Daily Office – Is the practise of pausing at various intervals throughout the day to become aware of God's presence. Practising silence and reading scripture, not for knowledge, but devotionally – what is God saying to me?





“If I could only prescribe one remedy for the ills of the modern world, I would prescribe silence. For if the Word of God were proclaimed, it would not be heard right now. There is too much noise. So I prescribe silence.” Kierkegaard

The only thing big enough to contain God is silence. Anon

The Christian life is like a swimming pool – all the noise is at the shallow end. Anon

To be still and silent, for even a few minutes, is surprisingly difficult and takes lots of practice! Don't be put off by the noise that enters your head – at least you are now aware of what Kierkegaard was talking about! Keep practising. Eventually you may hear the still, small voice of God in the quiet behind all the noise.

Read Exodus 20:8-11

Sabbath - is about stopping for 24 hours in every 7 days, a deliberate 'not doing' to experience God's grace.

Sabbath is like receiving the gift of a heavy 'snow day' every week. Suddenly you have the gift of a day to do whatever you want. You don't have any obligations, pressures or responsibilities. You have permission to play, to be with friends and family, take a nap in the afternoon, read a good book, go for a long run/ride. Few of us give ourselves a 'no obligation day' very often – God commands us to take one each week!

Stop – 'to stop' is built into the literal meaning of the Hebrew 'Sabbath'. We have limits. God is on the throne running the world. Just once a week we are called to stop, let go and trust him to do His job.

Rest – Once we stop, we are called to rest from our work and from our 'doings'.

Delight - The Sabbath was made for man and woman, not the other way round. Although it is God's command, it is a command to turn towards grace. Find something that brings you a greater awareness of God's grace and do that on your Sabbath.

Contemplate – We are to turn to face God on the Sabbath. It is supposed to be a taste of the glorious eternal party that awaits us when we see Him face to face – Sabbath includes turning to face God.

5. What difference would it make to your life if you celebrated a Sabbath every week?
6. What would you give up or set aside to turn towards God's grace?
(work, decision making, physical exhaustion, the to do list, hurriedness, talking, multitasking, technology, competitiveness, worry)
7. What could you do with your Sabbath to receive God's grace and turn towards him?