



Sabbatical

Small Group Resource

What is a Sabbatical?

A Sabbatical is both a time and place of rest, renewal, and realignment. Jesus commands his disciples to, “go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile (Mark 6.31, NLT).” This is time spent with Jesus focusing/refocusing priorities, healing from hurts, and reimagining your future ministry in God’s kingdom.

Why should we take a Sabbatical instead of a break?

When we take “breaks” we often disengage from growth. A break is good after a long sprint but will not prepare you to “press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me (you) heavenward in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3.14, NIV).” Whereas a break disconnects you, a sabbatical is meant to reconnect you with God. It serves to help ensure that every area of your life is submitted to the Lordship of Christ.

Checklist to prepare

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3 months out

- Pick a book or reading plan for your time.
- Pick up a journal for your experience.
- Start praying about any hurts, hang ups, or areas of growth for you.
- Start planning on your place and time.

1 month out

- Hand off responsibilities/ prepare or train an apprentice to continue your group.
- If you have not trained an apprentice, set a time when your group reconvenes ahead of time.



- Divide your sabbatical time into 3 phases/schedule a mini retreat for yourself.

Sabbatical Practices

Phase 1 Refresh from _____ to _____.

- Spend time refreshing physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Do things that bring you joy, avoid technology, catch up on things that can be accomplished to give you a sense of achievement.
- If possible, plan a trip away from your home.
- Take time to read things not attached to your profession or leading. Novels, biographies etc.
- Journaling/Reading the scripture.
 - Pick a book/s of the Bible to study.
 - Read through the entire book in one setting.
 - Re-read through chunks making observations in your journal (who, what, when, where, how, words that repeat, and phrases that stick out for further contemplation)
- Self-assessment (1 low, 7 high)

○ Spiritual life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○ Marriage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○ Family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○ Close Friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○ Extended Family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○ Physical Health	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○ Organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○ Emotional Health	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○ Spiritual Gifts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○ Career	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○ Financial Health	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○ Fun & Play	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
- What do your answers say to you?

Phase 2 Reflect from _____ to _____.

- Assess your past ministry session. What has worked well, what was frustrating, what have you learned? How is your work, family, and life balance? Are you excited about serving in God's kingdom or are you



tired, why? What are moments you can celebrate? Write these things in your journal.

- Continue to fill your time with life giving exercises.
- Continue reading through your book of the Bible you have chosen.
- Take a personality/spiritual gifts assessment. Reflect on your results, compare them to any former assessments you have taken.
- Journal on the following topics.
 - What would you title your past season in ministry?
 - What was the most life-giving event? What has been the most draining? What have you learned from both?
 - How have you grown as a disciple and how has your growth bared fruit?
 - Have you had a sinful response to a situation in your past ministry season? Have you resolved it with the Lord and others?
 - Ask God to reveal, remove, and replace any desires in your heart that are not from Him. Write these words down in your journal and record the steps the Holy Spirit leads you through.

Phase 2 Refocus from _____ to _____.

- Start looking ahead, allow the Holy Spirit to help you chart the next season of life. What changes do you need to make? Who or what needs more of your attention? What was distracting you or takin your focus away from following Jesus? What do you believe God is focusing you on for the next season?
- Put the books of the Bible that you just studied in your own words. Write the story from memory in a way that you would share with others about the journey that God has taken you on.
- Journal on the following topics.
 - What does God want to grow in your life? What does he want to prune?
 - How will you define success in the next season?
 - What new spiritual practices will you implement in the new season?
 - What new resources will you use in the next season?
 - What will inhibit any transformation from this Sabbatical?



- What are specific steps that you feel like the Holy Spirit is leading you too?
- Prepare a Sabbatical review to share with a minister of coach from your Sabbatical.

Assessment after Sabbatical

Meet with your minister or coach and go over your Sabbatical time. Schedule another time, 3 months out to review how you are growing after your Sabbatical.