

# **Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives**

*by Wayne Muller*

## ***Discussion Guide***

*Sabbath* (Bantam, 2000) is about taking time for what is really important and setting aside the clutter that keeps us away from God and others. The book offers suggestions for healing the emptiness left by busy schedules and work that never ends. Wayne Muller shows us how to get ahead by slowing down, in the process providing ideas to help us achieve our heart's desires.

*This discussion guide covers the seven topics presented in **Sabbath** and provides two questions (a and b) for each chapter within those topics.*

*Permission is granted to reproduce this discussion guide.*

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### **1. Introduction: Remember the Sabbath**

- a. Explain your motivation for exploring the Sabbath.
- b. What does the Sabbath mean to you?

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### **Rest**

*This section explores the importance of rest and why it is so elusive.*

### **2. Rest for the Weary**

- a. Recall a time when illness forced you to rest. How did it change you?
- b. Why is rest a necessity?

### **3. The Joy of Rest**

- a. Explain the purpose of the practice of Shabbat or Sabbath.

b. What do we learn about rest from the words and actions of Jesus?

#### **4. Legalism and the Dreary Sabbath**

a. Explain why God created the Sabbath and what was intended. How is it a gift to us?

b. How and why did the Sabbath become restrictive and dreary for some people?

#### **5. A New Beginning**

a. How does the Sabbath represent a new beginning?

b. What is the purpose of the Christian Sabbath? What activities help people achieve the intended goal of the Sabbath?

#### **6. It Is Good**

a. How does the Sabbath remind us of goodness?

b. What are some of the good things that are missed when people get too busy?

#### **7. Fear of Rest**

a. What causes reluctance to rest? What prevents you from resting?

b. What is needed to overcome fear of rest?

#### **8. Dormancy**

a. Explain what dormancy is and what it means to you. What are the two stages of dormancy?

b. What is the origin of the three days of dormancy?

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### **Rhythm**

*This section examines the rhythm of creation and how it relates to the Sabbath.*

#### **9. The Rhythm of Creation**

a. In your own words, explain what the rhythm of creation is and why it is important.

b. How does rest enhance rhythms? Discuss how you can increase your rhythm awareness.

## **10. Inner Music**

- a. Explain what inner music is and give some examples of it.
- b. How do inner rhythms help us find our way in the world?

## **11. Hurling Toward the Eschaton**

- a. What does progress mean to you? What problems are created in the name of progress? Give some examples.
- b. Discuss the meaning of “theology of progress.” How is it challenged by the Sabbath?

## **12. Let It Be**

- a. How does the Sabbath liberate us from the need to be finished?
- b. Discuss ways the world seduces us with an artificial urgency.

## **13. The Book of Hours**

- a. Explain the phrase “the perfection is in the repetition.”
- b. What seasons do you look forward to and why? What rituals do you have for those seasons?

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## **Time**

*This section considers the many aspects of the gift of time and how God desires we use this gift.*

## **14. A Life Well Lived**

- a. What do you consider to be a life well lived?
- b. Why does society value money more than it does time?

## **15. Seize the Day**

- a. Why did W. K. Kellogg replace three eight-hour shifts with four six-hour shifts? Explain why workers returned to eight-hour shifts in 1984.
- b. If you had a choice, what would be the ideal workday for you and why?

## **16. Why Time Is Not Money**

- a. How do you measure your wealth?
- b. What do you do that contributes to the gross national product? Compare this list with your activities that don't contribute to it.

## **17. A Deeper Wealth**

- a. Discuss ways to invest in people.
- b. What human qualities and gifts pay large dividends when invested?

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## **Happiness**

*This section looks at the reality of happiness and what causes it.*

## **18. The Pursuit of Happiness**

- a. What does it mean to be happy? Explain the causes and sensations.
- b. Discuss and list some things that eat away at happiness.

## **19. The Gospel of Consumption**

- a. What fuels the drive toward mass consumption? List some triggers.
- b. What is the relationship between happiness and mass consumption? Does buying things really make us happy? Explain.

## **20. Selling Unhappiness**

- a. Explain how product advertising is actually selling dissatisfaction.
- b. Why do people buy things they don't really need? List some reasons and discuss.

## **21. The Tyranny of Choice**

- a. Discuss some of the differences between choice and freedom.
- b. List and discuss some advantages and disadvantages of freedom of choice.

## **22. Sensuality and Delight**

- a. Why does the Sabbath emphasize sensuality and touch?
- b. Describe how it feels to touch the earth with bare feet or hands. Recall some past experiences.

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## **Wisdom**

*This section explores the power of knowledge and how it leads to actions.*

## **23. Doing Good Badly**

- a. Why does practicing love require rest? Give some examples.
- b. Discuss what is needed in order to do good.

## **24. Be Still and Know**

- a. Describe some things that are needed in order for the mind to be still.
- b. List some of the many benefits of simply being still.

## **25. Nobody Special**

- a. What does it mean to be “nobody special”? How does that quality give a person true freedom?
- b. List and discuss some examples of downward mobility.

## **26. Being Sabbath**

- a. What does it mean to be a Sabbath for other people? Recall a time when someone was a Sabbath for you.
- b. What qualities does it take to be a Sabbath for someone?

## **27. Beginner’s Mind**

- a. Discuss what it means to possess a beginner’s mind. How is this achieved?
- b. Why is it important to let go of what will happen next? How does this cultivate the beginner’s mind?

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## **Consecration**

*This section explores consecration and how it relates to the Sabbath.*

### **28. Mindfulness and Holiness**

- a. When you think of consecration, what images come to mind?
- b. How does mindfulness reveal what is holy?

### **29. The Way of Enough**

- a. What causes people to be trapped in seeking?
- b. Explain how Sabbath time ends seeking and begins a time for finding.

### **30. Ownership**

- a. Explore the truth of Matthew 6:21 – “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
- b. Discuss how a person can own things without becoming a slave to them.

### **31. Breaking the Trance**

- a. How does a person become seduced in a trance? What is needed to break a trance?
- b. Discuss some of the ways that people are driven to be useful.

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## **A Sabbath Day**

*This section offers insights into the start, middle, and end of the Sabbath.*

### **32. Evening**

- a. What is special about evening Sabbath time?
- b. What activities can be included in the Sabbath evening?

### **33. Morning**

- a. What is special about morning Sabbath time?
- b. What activities can be included in the Sabbath morning?

### **34. Afternoon**

- a. What is special about afternoon Sabbath time?
- b. What activities can be included in the Sabbath afternoon?

### **35. Leaving Sabbath Time**

- a. What insights about the Sabbath did you gain from reading this book?
- b. Discuss some of the Sabbath practices you would like to implement.