

# *"Sabbath in the Suburbs" Southminster Study*

## *Session One: Foundations*

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Welcome! I'm so glad you are here!

These next few weeks we are going to be exploring, sharing, and wrestling with the biblical concept of "Sabbath" as it is portrayed in the Old and New Testaments, expressed in Jewish and Christian thought and practice, and explored in the book "Sabbath in Suburbs" by MaryAnn Mckibben-Dana.

Each week you'll get a "take home packet" that will include some references to things we talked about in that week's section, a reflection exercise for further thought, and some readings that will be discussed in the next week's session. *If you have time to do those readings in between sessions, you may find it helpful, but it is not essential to do so.*

All this information is offered in a spirit of keeping you informed and offering opportunities to continue conversation and prayerful thought on sabbath, not in a spirit of giving you another "to do" item on your checklist. If you don't have time for it, give yourself the blessing of not worrying about!

Grace and Peace Be With You Always!

*Ben*

Ben Acton

Associate Pastor, Education and Youth Ministries  
Southminster Presbyterian Church



The following poem was used to open and close our time together. Read it again and as you have time and imagine what your own "one day" of Sabbath might look like. Imagining Sabbath in this way could be a first step to building a sababth cathedral for your (and your family's) life.

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*Six days shall you be a workaholic;  
On the seventh day, shall you join the serene company of human beings.*

*Six days shall you take orders from your boss;  
On the seventh day, shall you be master/mistress of your own life.*

*Six days shall you toil in the market;  
On the seventh day, shall you detach from money matters.*

*Six days shall you create, drive, invent, push;  
On the seventh day, shall you reflect.*

*Six days shall you be the perfect success;  
On the seventh day, shall you remember that not everything is in your power.*

*Six days shall you be a miserable failure;  
On the seventh day, shall you be on top of the world.*

*Six days shall you enjoy the blessings of work;  
On the seventh day, shall you understand that being is as important as doing.*

*-Blu Greenberg*

**In the space below, add your own statement that will assist you to begin building a foundation for your own Sabbath keeping:**

**Six days you shall\_\_\_\_\_.**

**On the seventh day, shall you\_\_\_\_\_.**

## Readings From This Session

Review these at your leisure noting how ideas about Sabbath first originated but continued to evolve and be developed over time in scripture:

**Genesis 1:31-2:4:** God rests after creation, setting pattern for “Sabbath.”

**Isaiah 58:11-14:** Isaiah frames “Sabbath” as a delight to enjoy rather than a rule to follow

**Matthew 12:9-14:** Jesus heals on the “Sabbath” giving new insight into what it means to fulfill and violate the understanding of “Sabbath keeping.”

From “Sabbath In The Suburbs” (pp. xi-xii):

*Our Sabbath project grew out of a desire to...see what would happen if, on one day out of seven, we stopped working, striving, and hurrying. The result of this experience was clarifying, expansive and freeing. It was also annoying, difficult, and odd. Our house was a perpetual wreck. We feel behind on work and domestic tasks. Our day-long togetherness sometimes drove us crazy. Yet we wouldn't trade the experience for anything.*

*This book is for anyone who wants to learn to live life at a savoring pace, especially in the company of family and loved ones. It's for parents who look around at the arms race of activities, sports, enrichment, and homework, and who feel a sense of unease amid all the good intentions of hard work. It's for people like a friend of mine, who looked up one day and noticed it had been four months since sine her family had a day with nothing on the calendar.*

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By the whole book! Visit this link:

[https://www.amazon.com/Sabbath-Suburbs-Familys-Experiment-Project/dp/0827235216/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1485901881&sr=8-1&keywords=sabbath+in+suburbs](https://www.amazon.com/Sabbath-Suburbs-Familys-Experiment-Project/dp/0827235216/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1485901881&sr=8-1&keywords=sabbath+in+suburbs)



## Readings for Next Time:

Our next session will continue to look at the origins of Sabbath in the Old Testament and the context in which Sabbath emerged. We may not hit on all these scriptures but some readings that could be of interest include:

**Exodus 1:8-14:** Description of Israel's slavery in Egypt under Pharaoh

**Exodus 2:23-25:** God hears the people's cry under slavery

**Exodus 20:1-17:** The 10 Commandments given for the first time; (Sabbath commandment is 20:8-11)

**Exodus 23:10-13:** Instructions from God to Moses about a "Sabbath" year

**Exodus 31:12-17:** More instructions regarding Sabbath—but slightly different than earlier provisions

**Exodus 34:21-24:** Sabbath Commandment given again

From "Sabbath in the Suburbs" (pp. 4-5):

*Sabbath-keeping seems quaint in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Most people can admit that it's a nice idea, a loft, pleasant-sounding, but unattainable goal....*

*But what's not to like? A day each week without work... a day to unplug, unwind, laugh, play, and love...*

*But how, how were we going to make this happen? How does it work, with two careers and three children, and the relentless tasks that make up the modern world?*