

REFLECTIONS ON SABBATH

Read Exodus 20:8-11.

In her book *Sabbath Sense*, Donna Schaper says that Sabbath means:

- * humans, being.
- * no shoulds.
- * putting margins on the pages of our days.
- * standing and being still, long enough, that we see into the depth of time.
- * our relief. It is our way out of urgency. It is the turn in the road back to grace.

Which of these statements about Sabbath speak to you?

John Calvin says that the Sabbath calls the faithful to *“refrain from their own works, in order to leave God to work within them.” We not only rest from our daily work, but, “abandon completely our own works as a basis for our relationship with God, for that relationship is grounded in grace.”*

How can faithfully observing a Sabbath time “open up space” within you?

What difference would this make for you?

Sing/hum or listen to the hymn, “Amazing Grace” to yourself, paying particular attention to the words. What is grace for you? How do you experience it?

“The Deuteronomy reason for Sabbath-keeping is that our ancestors in Egypt went for 400 years without a vacation (Deut. 5:15.) The consequence: they were no longer considered persons but slaves. Hands. Work units. Not persons created in the image of God but equipment for making brick and building pyramids. Humanity was defaced.”

Eugene Peterson, *Working the Angles*

Do you ever feel like a slave – just hands, a worker? Who else in your community feels this way? Would Sabbath be a gift and good news for them?

Sabbath can be observed in solitude, such as taking a walk alone. Sabbath can also be observed in community, by worshiping in church or sharing a meal.

Do you observe Sabbath in one or both ways?

If Sabbath is “an intentional time and space for God to enter in” or “spiritual leisure,” where are you finding and observing Sabbath in your life right now?

Are there any new ways in which you would like to be observing Sabbath?

Shabbat shalom! (Sabbath peace)