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## OVERVIEW

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For today's practice we will be digging into the disciplines of fasting and sabbath rest, and exploring the art of being a "non-anxious presence" in the transitional seasons of our lives. This wilderness practice is designed to be a full-day experience but you are welcome to modify it for your context.

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## CONTEXT

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According to the Jewish calendar Saturday is the last day of the week and is observed as the Sabbath. As you know, Sabbath is the day of the week set aside from the other six to pause all work, to rest, and to reflect on the goodness and provision of God. The foundations for the Sabbath come from the Genesis account of creation in which God crafted the universe in six days and on the seventh day He rested after declaring His handiwork "finished" (Genesis 2:1). But what's even more interesting is that God didn't just create Sabbath for humans, He observed it Himself. What a beautiful image: the God who rests expects us to do the same.

Meanwhile, back in the Easter story, it's the Sabbath. Where do we find Jesus? Resting ("sabbathing") in the grave. This isn't a coincidence and it isn't the first time we find Jesus having a nap (if you will) in the middle of a generally intense situation. Remember the infamous storm on the Sea of Galilee? The one where Jesus is sleeping in the stern of the boat while the disciples are scared out of their minds (Mark 4:35-41)? Despite the massive responsibility of being "the hope of the world" Jesus somehow manages to live from a posture of sabbath rest even in the midst of crisis; a quality that is rarely seen in our modern, frantic world.

Today, with this in mind, we'll choose to embrace Sabbath in the hope of becoming what one writer calls a "non-anxious presence". Like Jesus, we will slow down, lay fear to rest, and allow ourselves to be at ease even within the darkest of graves or the most turbulent of storms. With an abiding trust in the God who makes all things new, we will lean fully into the wilderness of waiting, believing that new life will eventually spring up from the grave of our hopes. Let's embrace the gift of Sabbath together.

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## PRACTICE PART 1: TECH BLACKOUT

SABBATH | FASTING | PRESENCE

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## HOW TO

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As a practical expression of Sabbath, today's practice is built around a full day fast from the distractions of technology. You are invited to fully unplug from the chaos of our heavily entertained and hyper-connected world

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and to choose to be present to your surroundings, to those around you, and to the input of your five senses. We recommend the following steps:

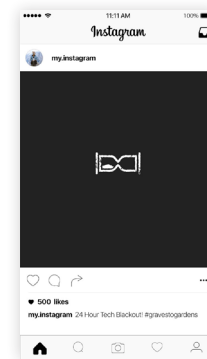
- 1. Set a start and end time together:** Ideally that would be a 24 hour period starting Friday at dusk and ending Saturday at dusk, however any amount of time will do (we recommend at least 4 hours for entry level impact). The longer you go, the more you will receive from this practice.
- 2. For best results:** Go dark on all forms of digital entertainment. Turn off all electronic devices, mobile phones, tvs, laptops, gaming systems, etc.
- 3. Turn off your internet router** (unplug or power down).
- 4. Place all mobile devices in a box or basket** and put them somewhere out of sight.
- 5. Emergency Contact:** You may want to let a few people know how to get in touch with you in case of emergency but emphasize that you won't be available for regular communication (see social media option below).

**SOCIAL  
MEDIA**

**OPTIONAL:** Before going "tech-dark" post the "time-out" image. Share about your Easter Sabbath tech-black-out. Invite others to join you as well.

Time-out image available at [gravestogardens.com](http://gravestogardens.com)

**#gravestogardens**



**PRACTICE PART 2:  
SABBATH IDEAS**

SCRIPTURE | CREATIVITY | PRESENCE | PILGRIMAGE | HOSPITALITY

**READ  
SCRIPTURE**

Most of the library of scripture was written to be read out loud in large portions. Gather your household, choose a book of the Bible or a large section of scripture and read it out loud together. Consider taking turns with each chapter and try to avoid discussion until you've completed the entire reading (alternately, try reading an entire book of the Bible in one sitting by yourself).

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**GET  
CREATIVE**

Embrace the joy of making, building, drawing, crafting, sculpting, baking, and shaping. Make sure you're doing it from a posture of rest vs. a desire to "accomplish a task".

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**BE HERE  
NOW**

Practice being extra-present where you are. Pause for a few minutes during the day and thank God for your five senses each by name. Be still and take time to observe what you hear, smell, and see. Enjoy the taste of a good meal or the feel of a comfortable blanket, chair or even a bath.

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**PILGRIMAGE**

A pilgrimage is a journey with a spiritual purpose. Try going on a walk or hike with the intention of observing the goodness of God wherever you can find it. Breathe in the fresh air, feel the stable ground beneath your feet, notice the unique aspects of flora and fauna wherever you find them. Pause in areas of particular beauty or calm to "bathe" in the serenity and power of God's creation. Thank Him for the gift of nature.

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**BOOK &  
BLANKET**

As a group (or by yourself) spend some time curled up with a good book and a blanket. Consider reading out loud together (Lewis or Tolkein anyone?) or, if reading independently, come together at some point to share what each of you have read and learned.

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**SIMPLE  
EATING**

It's not uncommon to spend a good portion of your normal day preparing or cleaning up after meals. Why not plan some simple and healthy options that don't require a lot of prep? Fresh cut fruits and vegetables, pre-made meals, finger foods, a simple grazing platter, and/or an arsenal of healthy snacks should help make the day much more restful for everyone.

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**END  
NOTES**

End your Sabbath day by going outside together and looking at the stars (if you can see them). Reflect on the consistency and magnitude of God's love and the gift of sabbath rest.

Remind your household about the early wakeup for Easter sunrise.