

**Exploring the use of Sabbath Rest as a  
contemplative practice in Spiritual Direction in  
New Zealand**

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**A Research Project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Spiritual  
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Psalms 46:10 - Be still and know that I am God.

Psalms 131:2 - I have stilled and quieted my soul; my soul within me is like a weaned child with his mother.

Matthew 11: 28 - Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Isaiah 58:13 - enjoy the Sabbath and speak of it with delight as the LORD's holy day.

Although a church-going Christian since childhood, I am relatively new to contemplative practices, including Spiritual Direction. Having recently become more aware of the benefits of rest and the impact on relationships when people **have extended time in which to engage**, I wonder about Sabbath as a form of generous hospitality from me to God. I have been surprised that rest or Sabbath are not mentioned among spiritual disciplines along with solitude and silence, although I acknowledge that "stillness" is, and I agree that many disciplines are related to Sabbath Rest<sup>1</sup>. Within the New Zealand Spiritual Direction context, I sought to take a snapshot of contemplative practices to see how the Sabbath (or rest) featured. Knowing that contemplative practices seem to foster God as a personal reality<sup>2</sup> I wondered if directees or directors had found the Sabbath to be a "privileged place" of meeting God.<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this project, Sabbath (or) rest is defined as a regular, deliberate & intentional practice of setting aside a significant period of time (ie: in a weekly cycle and for more than a few hours at a time). In exploring this I will first describe how Sabbath Rest fits within the understanding of the image of God and the image of **His creation, humankind**.

Spiritual life centres around two questions:

- Who is God?
- Who am I in relation to this God?<sup>4</sup>

Foundational to Christian understanding is the image of God as One who initiates and longs for connection with His creation. God's first question to humankind (Gen 3 v 9), "Where are you?" echoes through the ages and God continues to seek us out (Luke 15: lost sheep, coin and son). Through Scripture, nature and the person of Jesus, God reveals Himself as the One who capably and abundantly provides for His children, each uniquely made in His image. Set apart as God's nation, the Israelites were to enjoy one day a week to cease (from anything deemed to be work), to rest, feast and celebrate His goodness<sup>5</sup>. Rather than 'rest', the original word used for

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<sup>1</sup> Marva Dawn *Keeping the Sabbath wholly: ceasing, resting, embracing, feasting*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. 1989). p.xii

<sup>2</sup> William Barry and William Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 2010) p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* p.54

<sup>4</sup> Spiritual Growth Ministries. Spiritual Directors Formation Programme 2019, Workshop 9

<sup>5</sup> *Keeping the Sabbath wholly: ceasing, resting, embracing, feasting*.

Sabbath is stop<sup>6</sup>, referencing God's final day of creation when He 'rested' from labour, not due to physical limitations, but as a sign of completion and abundance.<sup>7</sup> Sabbaths were "living experiences"<sup>8</sup> where each element had a meaning, seen as a gift, not as a duty.<sup>9</sup> I have reflected that the Sabbath, one of many Jewish holy observances designed to remember and acknowledge God's acts & His promises<sup>10</sup>, was primarily designed to ensure that His children would attend to matters of connection with Himself, with others and with creation<sup>11</sup>, and as such it is worthy of my consideration. In this as in all life, the relationship between Israel and God was to be a witness to other nations. As Brueggemann says, our own spirituality is diminished and trivialised if we neglect the Jewishness that belongs to our own tradition and practice of faith.<sup>12</sup> Not all agree that there is a place for Sabbath today, saying that in Jesus we have the reality of our rest.<sup>13</sup>

Although 'taking a Sabbatical' is heard in some spheres, in the Western world and the New Zealand Christian context it seems that setting aside 24 hours once a week as holy to God has dropped. Approaching retirement age, I have seen New Zealand shift to a post-Christian society. I have witnessed the erosion of the sacredness of Sunday and other Christian holiday periods (ie: chain stores open every day, sometimes promoting specials unavailable on other days). The changing nature of work has enabled labour beyond office space and hours, and for many the 40-hour working week has long ceased to exist. The impact of progress (such as the disruption of the day/night rhythm with the invention of the light bulb<sup>14</sup>) and the digital age with instant connectivity sets us up for 24/7 living. With the expectation of being constantly accessible and connected, the average person spends 5 hours a day on their phone<sup>15</sup>. Humankind suffers a malaise of compulsiveness and distractions, busyness is a badge of honour and work the newest addiction of choice.<sup>16</sup> We lack boundaries and suffer from the stress of tension, anxiety, overwork, ceaseless effort, insufficient rest and the need to accomplish.<sup>17</sup> As a

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<sup>6</sup> Lynne Baab, *Sabbath keeping: Finding Freedom in the Rhythms of Rest*. (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press 2005). P.26

<sup>7</sup> John Ortberg, *Soul Keeping* (2014) Available at <http://www.amazon.co.uk/kindlestore> Loc 2078

<sup>8</sup> Martha Zimmerman, *Celebrating Biblical Feasts* (Minnesota, Bethany House Pub, 2004) p.19

<sup>9</sup> *Celebrating Biblical Feasts* p 22

<sup>10</sup> *Sabbath keeping: Finding Freedom in the Rhythms of Rest*. p.92

<sup>11</sup> *Keeping the Sabbath wholly: ceasing, resting, embracing, feasting*. xii

<sup>12</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Praying the Psalms* (Winona, Minnesota, Saint Mary's Press, 1989) p.45

<sup>13</sup> Delina Pryce McPhaull, *Giving Sabbath a Rest* 11.10.18 Christianity Today 26.8.19

<sup>14</sup> Andrew Swoboda, *Subversive Sabbath* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Publishing Group 2018) p.22

<sup>15</sup> Rebecca Douglas, *The Joy of Missing Out* (Mindfood, mindfoodmedia.com) p.40

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Storment, 2014 *God @ Work – a day off*. May 14 2013 *God @ Work – a day off* Wineskins 26.8.19 <<http://jonathanstorment.wineskins.org/tag/rest/>>

<sup>17</sup> Marva Dawn, M.J. *The Sense of the Call* (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. 2006) p.68

result, we are dehumanised<sup>18</sup> and our souls die<sup>19</sup>. We develop habits of inattention, which in turn makes it hard to attend to a mysterious God.<sup>20</sup>

Inherent in our creatureliness are limitations, such as aging and death. Another is the need to rest. Where is there time for God who is someone other than One we grab hold of on the go, **the way we might grab a quick and convenient take out coffee**? To linger unhurriedly and time-wastefully with God? There's recent emerging recognition that FOMO<sup>21</sup> can be replaced by JOMO,<sup>22</sup> that boredom is good<sup>23</sup>, that being in the outdoors and connecting with people in real time is valuable. Will the Sabbath allow us a vehicle for showing hospitality to God, self, others and creation?

Literature on the place of Sabbath in modern Jewish and Christian context is plentiful. My reading has led me to consider why would God tell us what to do, and the answer, springing from His wisdom, is 'for our good'. I think without God mandating the Sabbath, mankind would not willingly undertake it. Although we say our hearts are turned towards God, we still wander and run errant.

#### *Methodology:*

**Considering that a survey would be the best way to get a snapshot of how Sabbath was present in spiritual direction in NZ**, I designed a survey (Appendix B) and sent it by email to

- Spiritual Directors (through ASCDANZ<sup>24</sup>) - 25 responses
- Spiritual Directees (trainees of the SGM programme and personal friends) - 14 responses

#### *Key findings:*

Directors varied in the length of time directing, with two thirds directing for more than 5 years. The most common practices used by directors to connect with God were similar to those most commonly recommended to directees. These were

- contemplative prayer or meditation
- lectio or visio divina
- silence
- walking or being outdoors with nature.

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<sup>18</sup> *Sabbath keeping: Finding Freedom in the Rhythms of Rest.* p.92

<sup>19</sup> *Soul Keeping* Loc 2031

<sup>20</sup> *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* p.48

<sup>21</sup> FOMO = fear of missing out

<sup>22</sup> JOMO = joy of missing out

<sup>23</sup> Joanna Mathers, *Boredom & Desire.* (NZ Herald Canvas magazine July 20, 2019) p9

<sup>24</sup> Association of Christian Spiritual Directors of Aotearoa New Zealand

Later in the survey on a 0-5 rating, most participants said that they undertake something akin to “Sabbath Rest” at 3 or higher frequency.

Although many commented they don’t use the term “Sabbath Rest”, 16 of the directors indicated that they often or more than often talk about rest when directing, and 7 said they never had. One said that it came up more in the context of supervision of directors, clergy and fulltime workers. In commenting on the Sabbath Rest experience of directees in ministry, many directors acknowledged it was needed due to busyness, it was hard for their directees to do, and one added that clergy need to feel that it is OK. One wrote of his/her role in lobbying for denominational minister training to include Sabbath. For some the only opportunity for rest came when on retreat. Although often spoken to congregations, clergy do not seem to undertake it themselves.

Most respondents rated their knowledge of Sabbath at a 3 or higher. The majority acknowledged that Sabbath as a spiritual practice had a place today and equally saw it as

- a chance to reflect/connect with self and God.
- to stop doing and move away from noise, media or distraction.

In considering Sabbath possibilities, most felt that the main benefits were in reflecting, in gaining awareness of self and of God and of bringing balance, health and wholeness. The barriers were busyness, lack of discipline and other demands such as family commitments.

Other survey comments:

- We need a fluid understanding of what constitutes Sabbath in relation to context i.e.: seasons of life and individual differences. Any practice offered must be attainable in the life of the directee.
- Although seen as valuable, the challenge to undertake it regularly was acknowledged, especially for those in pastoral ministry.
- Many are unsure how to make time, preserve rhythm and momentum and what to do/not to do.
- There can be Sabbath moments in any day.
- Rest takes different forms at different life stages i.e.: retirement.

Other words for Sabbath: retreat or quiet time, rest or reflection, rahui (i.e.: to restore the mauri/life force - my interpretation<sup>25</sup>)

Limitations of the survey:

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<sup>25</sup> Dennis Ngawhare Pounamu, D, Stuff, 11.9.16, *A rahui, or ritual prohibition, is more than a fishing ban – it’s about respect*. Stuff. 17.9.19 <<https://www.stuff.co.nz/taranaki-daily-news/opinion/84135421/ahui-or-ritual-prohibition-is-more-than-a-fishing-ban--it-is-about-respect>>

Although I considered using the more common term “Sabbath Keeping”, I wanted to avoid any association with particular denominations and with legalistic observance. Using the term “Sabbath Rest” however may have confined survey respondents to the single aspect of ‘rest’. From reading for this project I have realised that Sabbath observance incorporates much more than rest, unknown to me when I created the survey.

Implications for Spiritual Direction:

Spiritual Direction allows a person to pay attention to God’s personal communication, respond to it, grow in intimacy with God and live out the consequences of the relationship<sup>26</sup>. It is therefore likely that within direction there may be a discussion of the directee’s spiritual practices.

As directors we need to be aware of a broad range of possibly privileged **practices** to help directees find the best place as they wait for God.<sup>27</sup> There are several possibilities for exploring Sabbath as a regular and intentional activity:

- as a contemplative practice
- as a strategy for self-care
- as an avenue for issues of justice
- when undergoing a revision of Image of God.

#### A contemplative practice

Could the Sabbath be another intentional way of thinning our lives to be thick with God?<sup>28</sup> Could it better orient our lives and hearts around Jesus<sup>29</sup>? Several authors<sup>30</sup> attest to the transformative power of the Sabbath. Sabbath observation allows us to integrate all the scattered parts of ourselves into a whole.<sup>31</sup> During a rich and full quiet time with no **options** or distractions,<sup>32</sup> the Kingdom of God reclaims, revitalizes and renews us so that it can reign in us.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* p.8

<sup>27</sup> *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* p.62

<sup>28</sup> Alicia Britt Chole, *40 Days of decrease* (Nashville Tennessee, W Publishing 2016) back cover

<sup>29</sup> Lauren Winner, *Mudhouse Sabbath*. (Brewster, Mass. Paraclete Press 2003) Loc.430

<sup>30</sup> *Subversive Sabbath* p 175, *Sabbath keeping: Finding Freedom in the Rhythms of Rest*. P 113, *THE SABBATH* by Abraham Joshua Heschel.doc 26.8.19

<https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/>

<sup>31</sup> *Keeping the Sabbath wholly: ceasing, resting, embracing, feasting*. p.142

<sup>32</sup> *Sabbath keeping: Finding Freedom in the Rhythms of Rest*. p.27

<sup>33</sup> *Keeping the Sabbath wholly: ceasing, resting, embracing, feasting*. p.33

## A strategy for self-care

The most important teaching of the Sabbath is of our resting in God<sup>34</sup>. Citing exhaustion as the number one enemy of Christian spiritual formation today, taking rest seriously as a spiritual discipline<sup>35</sup> is worth considering. The degree to which we struggle to give up a day could be a sign of how enmeshed we are in misplaced priorities. Baab argues strongly for the 24 hour time period each week<sup>36</sup> and reinforces that it is not a day to luxuriate in selfishness, but to turn our hearts to the God who is always concerned with human need.<sup>37</sup> There is something deeply spiritual about honouring the limitations of our existence as human<sup>38</sup>.

The Sabbath is observed as a rhythm of work and rest<sup>39</sup>, which then exist in a mutually beneficial relationship<sup>40</sup>. Working from a place of rest<sup>41</sup>, the benefits of the one day carry over onto other days, and our responsibility to the whole world becomes anointed<sup>42</sup>. Tuning out - especially in relation to technology - encourages us to focus on and take pleasure in what is in front of us, what we have. We say goodbye to worrying about who is doing what without us<sup>43</sup> and free ourselves from the temptation of total control over the world.<sup>44</sup>

Dawn outlines the **crises that today's clergy are in<sup>45</sup>, saying the greatest danger is losing our souls in service, the greatest rival to Jesus<sup>46</sup>**. She postulates that the Sabbath allows us to rediscover the Kingdom,<sup>47</sup> and within it, our sense of call, which is key to maintaining the work<sup>48</sup>. Undertaking the Sabbath can remind us that we are captured by grace, carried by grace

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<sup>34</sup> Richard Foster, *Prayer* (London Sydney Auckland, Hodder & Stoughton 1972) p.100

<sup>35</sup> Richella Parham, *The Spiritual Discipline of Rest*, Renovare 26.8.19 <<https://renovare.org/articles/the-spiritual-discipline-of-rest>

<sup>36</sup> *Sabbath keeping: Finding Freedom in the Rhythms of Rest*. p.114

<sup>37</sup> *Sabbath keeping: Finding Freedom in the Rhythms of Rest*. p.112

<sup>38</sup> Ruth Haley Brown, *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership* (Downers Grove, Illinois IVP, 2008) p.133

<sup>39</sup> *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership* p.134

<sup>40</sup> *THE SABBATH by Abraham Joshua Heschel.doc* 26.8.19  
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<sup>41</sup> Breen, M & Kellestad, W. *A Passionate Life*. (Colorado Springs, Nexgen Cook Communication Ministries, 2005) p67

<sup>42</sup> *The Sense of the Call* p.59

<sup>43</sup> *The Sense of the Call* p.40

<sup>44</sup> *Subversive Sabbath* p.58

<sup>45</sup> *The Sense of the Call* p.40 - 46

<sup>46</sup> *The Sense of the Call* p.47

<sup>47</sup> *The Sense of the Call* p.10

<sup>48</sup> *The Sense of the Call* p.13

and cared for by grace.<sup>49</sup> Both the Sabbath day and a Sabbath way of life are especially important for the wholeness of clergy.<sup>50</sup>

Ministers can be the worst at keeping it, which can be an indicator of how much we are depending on ourselves.<sup>51</sup> Vitally, clergy must stop with our efforts to please God and save the world<sup>52</sup>, and with our misguided sense of self-sacrifice. We need to stop serving God so well that we are unwilling to take adequate care of ourselves.<sup>53</sup> Being reminded of our loved-ness and identity in Jesus is the only counterbalance to this.<sup>54</sup>

### As an avenue for issues of justice

Nothing says you are not a slave as much as not working. Israel was to remember they were no longer slaves to Pharaoh.<sup>55</sup> We need reminding that we are not slaves to our culture's emphases on consumption, efficiency, productivity and time management.<sup>56</sup> Sabbath is God's way of letting us know we are worth more than what we do.<sup>57</sup> By observing the spirit behind the instructions<sup>58</sup> we learn to rejoice in what we have<sup>59</sup>, reinforcing simplicity, freedom and sustainability. In caring for others, we desire our rest not be at the expense of another's toil or misery<sup>60</sup>, so we think carefully about, for example, whether we will avail ourselves of the Boxing Day sales. As we engage thoughtfully in what we do on the Sabbath, we find carry over into our daily lives.

### When undergoing a revision of Image of God

The way we live is profoundly shaped by our picture of God.<sup>61</sup> How do I recognise and respond to the God who has set aside a day of joy, a sanctuary from travails and even a foretaste of the perfected world that will someday be attained?<sup>62</sup> The Sabbath was a day of spiritual enrichment meant to illuminate key concepts in the traditional Jewish perception of the world<sup>63</sup> with the

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<sup>49</sup> *The Sense of the Call* p.33

<sup>50</sup> *The Sense of the Call* p.33

<sup>51</sup> *The Sense of the Call* p.34

<sup>52</sup> *The Sense of the Call* p.48

<sup>53</sup> *The Sense of the Call* p.185

<sup>54</sup> *The Sense of the Call* p.49

<sup>55</sup> Jonathan Stortment, 26.5.2009 *Sabbath* 26.8.19 <<http://jonathanstortment.wineskins.org/2009/05/>>

<sup>56</sup> Peter Horne, 29.5.13 *Sabbath as a spiritual discipline* Pete's Patter 27.8.19 <<https://ozziepete.wordpress.com/2013/05/29/sabbath-a-spiritual-discipline/>>

<sup>57</sup> Jonathan Stortment, 26.5.2009 *Sabbath* 26.8.19 <<http://jonathanstortment.wineskins.org/2009/05/>>

<sup>58</sup> *Celebrating Biblical feasts* p 180

<sup>59</sup> *Sabbath keeping: Finding Freedom in the Rhythms of Rest.* p.18

<sup>60</sup> *Mudhouse Sabbath.* Loc 368

<sup>61</sup> Trevor Hudson *Discovering your spiritual identity* (Downers Grove Illinois, IVP, 2010) p 13

<sup>62</sup> M.J.L. *Shabbat 101* <<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/shabbat-101/>>

<sup>63</sup> M.J.L. *Shabbat 101* <<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/shabbat-101/>>

theme of creation, revelation, and redemption<sup>64</sup>. When instituting the gift of the Sabbath, the caring and just God revealed in Amos and Luke 4 demonstrated humanitarianism (in caring for our creatureliness), ecological care (rest for livestock and land)<sup>65</sup>, social justice (provision for those on the fringes)<sup>66</sup>, and economic justice (choices made on that day don't enslave others)<sup>67</sup>. Taking Sabbath rest helps us better notice the work of God, and absolutely convinces us of the goodness of God.<sup>68</sup>

I reflect on the following in concluding:

- A beginner to regular and intentional Sabbaths, I have never taken part in a traditional Sabbath. I am self-taught through literature. I am white, western, from a conservative stream, with a privatised and pragmatic viewpoint. Sabbath was observed by a collective of people. I do mine solo. What will Sabbath look like for me?
- What does Sabbath look like for others? In New Zealand culture people, including clergy, work on Sunday and often more than 5 days a week. As Sunday increasingly seems to mirror the other days of the week how do we ensure that Sabbath is more than a day off to catch up on overdue **chores**.
- How does the church today corporately hold the Sabbath? Reflect **on** its original intent? Counter-culturally honour the Sabbath?
- How do I and others form the Sabbath so that it is not a 'design my own' version? When I dictate the specifics, do they equate to the guidelines and rigorous obedience **indicated by God in the Old Testament**?
- Although God often graciously breaks into my world (oh, my arrogance!), I acknowledge that I am in control of the connection. It is up to me to regularly and intentionally observe - my reluctance and distractions reveal that I have as many excuses and idols as my Old Testament counterparts. What does this say about where I look for my sense of identity?<sup>69</sup>
- Does the space provided by the Sabbath allow God to be for me who He wishes?<sup>70</sup>
- I notice creeping into the day the things it is designed to free me from i.e. judging its effectiveness or needing to control it.

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<sup>64</sup> Daniel Kohn, *Shabbat Liturgy* <<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/shabbat-liturgy/>>

<sup>65</sup> *Subversive Sabbath* p.126

<sup>66</sup> *Subversive Sabbath* p.90

<sup>67</sup> *Subversive Sabbath* p.90

<sup>68</sup> *Sabbath keeping: Finding Freedom in the Rhythms of Rest*. p.17

<sup>69</sup> *Discovering your spiritual identity* p25

<sup>70</sup> *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* p34

- When exhausted, disciplined choices are more difficult, i.e.: I eat badly, I numbingly engage in media etc. Reluctance to engage in Sabbath is perhaps also a sign of exhaustion.

My determination to continue exploring Sabbath observance has increased through this project, as has my awareness of its possibilities as a spiritual practice with my three current directees, all of whom are in ministry.

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*Refresh Journal*

Authors Sue Pickering and Tilden Edwards

Google: God space, soul space, Jewish learning of Sabbath

## Appendix A: Hints on how to begin a Sabbath

1) Decide what day will be the Sabbath. If not Sunday, another day, but as a part of a regular rhythm<sup>71</sup> Diary it and guard it. For some, beginning with full immersion in 24 hours is the way to go. For others, start with a small do-able block of time, but as long as possible. The aim would be to move towards taking a full 24-hour period each week.

2) Determine clear boundaries for what you will intentionally not do on the Sabbath. Choose things that offer freedom *from* forces, systems, and cycles that muddy your experience of God's presence<sup>72</sup>.

3) Acknowledge the barriers you have (and recognise new ones as they appear over time). i.e.: fear - who am I if I don't have something to show for the day? What will I have to face in myself if the noise of the world is silenced? Accept them and yourself with kindness. Attend to them as they fall into grace over time.

3) Brainstorm a few things you will do. More than anything else, make sure you stop your *normal* activities, whatever is "work" for you. Do what you gladly choose to do, and don't be legalistic about it.<sup>73</sup> Think holistic rest: physical, psychological and spiritual.<sup>74</sup> Gathered worship is traditionally a component of the Sabbath. Other ideas - Sleep. Play. Relax. Make love. Play sport or listen to music. Draw a picture. Plant some flowers. Read a novel or magazine. Listen to a sermon if you want. Sit and listen to the wind in the trees. Talk to (or even better, listen to) your spouse. Traditionally couples were encouraged to make love on Sabbath eve. Make special food. Only do what's "spiritual" in the normal sense of the word if it's refreshing for you<sup>75</sup> and if it not what you normally do in a working week. Put limits on devices and digital engagement.

4) Tell others when you are taking your Sabbath so that they can respect those boundaries. Prepare in other ways so that work can be kept at bay ie: cook food, organise your schedule for

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<sup>71</sup> *Keeping the Sabbath wholly: ceasing, resting, embracing, feasting.* p.7

<sup>72</sup> *THE SABBATH by Abraham Joshua Heschel.* doc 26.8.19

<https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/>

<sup>73</sup> *Keeping the Sabbath wholly: ceasing, resting, embracing, feasting.* p.xiii

<sup>74</sup> Tish Harrison Warren, *Liturgy of the Ordinary (2016)* Available

at <http://www.amazon.co.uk/kindlestore/>

Loc 1809

<sup>75</sup> C. Anderson, 8.6.18 *Why Sabbath needs to be one of our spiritual disciplines* Missionary Life 29.8.19

<<https://missionarylifemag.org/2018/06/08/why-take-sabbath-spiritual-discipline/>

the days beyond the Sabbath. For clergy, Dawn stresses the need to inform congregation and other leaders that you are undertaking a Sabbath (not a day off)<sup>76</sup>.

5) Expect discomfort, boredom and restlessness.<sup>77</sup> This is part of weaning from the control we have when we're defined by doing. We are really bad at doing nothing<sup>78</sup>. Understand that enjoyment takes practice . . .<sup>79</sup> we must re-learn. The holiness of rest & the blessedness of unproductivity is foreign to us.

6) Whatever form your Sabbath takes, try it for a prolonged period of time (6-9 months), allowing the experience itself to become your teacher. Don't judge it, rather trust God's slow but certain work. Commit, do it, repeat it, repeat it, repeat it. When you "muck" something up, don't worry about it, but notice it and reflect on what it's saying to you. Determine how you will handle it next time.

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<sup>76</sup> *The Sense of the Call* p.69 - 71

<sup>77</sup> *Subversive Sabbath* p.193 – 4

<sup>78</sup> *Soul Keeping* Loc.2031

<sup>79</sup> *Liturgy of the Ordinary* Loc.1581

## Appendix B – The Survey

Hello. Thanks for opening this email.

My special interest project for Spiritual Direction Training requires input from both directors and directees.

In our role as directors, we sometimes discuss or recommend practices that will assist spiritual growth.

Within the contemplative tradition, these may include solitude, silence, experiences in the outdoors, prayer and scripture reading.

I wonder what is the experience of Sabbath Rest (Sabbath Rest) in the New Zealand context. For the purposes of this project, Sabbath Rest is defined as

a regular, deliberate & intentional practice of setting aside a significant period of time (ie: weekly & more than a few hours)

You can either answer directly to this email or use the link below to answer on Survey Monkey. Closing date for replies is Friday 6 September.

Are you answering as director or directee? How long have you been a director? How long have you been a directee?
In what ways is Sabbath Rest relevant for us today?
What contemplative practices do you regularly use to connect with God?
(For directors) What are the most frequent contemplative practices you recommend others use to connect with God?
(For directors) On a scale of 0 (never) – 5 (almost always), have you suggested or recommended Sabbath Rest in SD? Comment if you wish.
(For directees) Has your director talked to you about the place of Sabbath Rest in your life? Comment if you wish.
On a scale of 0 (never) – 5 (almost always), have you practiced Sabbath Rest? What form did it take? (In what ways was it regular, deliberate & intentional? Or anything else?) Comment if you wish.
On a scale of 0 (never) – 5 (almost always), where do you rate your knowledge of Sabbath Rest? Comment if you wish.

(For directors). If you have directed people in ministry, in your opinion, what is the place of Sabbath Rest for him/her/them?
What possibilities/benefits do you see in Sabbath Rest as a contemplative practice?
What are the barriers?
Do you have resources you can recommend?
Are there other words you have used to describe Sabbath Rest?
Is there anything else you would like to add?

## **Special Interest Project – Questionnaire Privacy & Confidentiality Statement**

Your participation in this questionnaire will assist me to prepare the Special Interest Project requirement of my formation as a Spiritual Director with Spiritual Growth Ministries Trust in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Responses to this questionnaire will be seen only by me and will be destroyed once I complete the project. Information collected may be included in my assignment.

Names and other identifying features will not be revealed. The completed project will be assessed and may be made available on the Spiritual Growth Ministries website – [www.sgm.org.nz](http://www.sgm.org.nz)

You have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) or to revoke consent for information from your questionnaire to be used.

The supervisor of this project is SGM Assistant Programme Coordinator, David Crawley e-mail: [davidrcrawley@gmail.com](mailto:davidrcrawley@gmail.com). You may contact him if you have any concerns.

I have read and understood the SGM Project – Questionnaire Privacy & Confidentiality statement and agree to information provided by me being used for Petra's project, which may be made available on the Spiritual Growth Ministries Trust website.

Yes No