

SABBATICAL: PURPOSE, STRUCTURE, & TIPS

*My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with me."
And my heart responds, "Lord I am coming." Psalm 27:8*

Purpose: To have an intentional time away from ministry responsibilities and expectations that creates space for rest (externally and internally), listening to the Lord, retooling with knowledge and skills, and refocusing for future ministry direction.

Structure: (Customize % of time for each)

Phase I – Release, Relinquish, Rest, Decompress, Recover

Phase II – Play, Explore, Experience, Reflect, Listen, Learn

Phase III – Notice, Catch Vision, Refocus, Realign, Plan, Strategize

Phase IV – Re-entry, Re-engagement

Tips:

Before Sabbatical:

- Need support and guidance from leadership for release from work/ministry responsibilities
- As you think about amount of time for the sabbatical, err on the side of longer
- Involve a group of sabbatical coaches for focus, input, and support
- Stay open handed about what God will reveal during this time

During Sabbatical:

- During Phase I - Unplug from technology, availability, and even current location that has ministry responsibilities and expectations
- Create and guard space to be with and hear from God
- Minimize activities, places and people that are not life-giving
- Enjoy life-giving activities, places and people
- Consider learning a new creative skill (lifegiving)
- Be flexible with plans and ready to change them if they aren't working
- During Phase IV - Take time to celebrate the Sabbatical experience

After Sabbatical:

- Commit to review important takeaways from Sabbatical experience periodically

You must arrange to live with deep contentment, joy, and confidence in your everyday experience of life with God.

(Dallas Willard's input to John Ortberg during his sabbatical)

Cycle of Grace



Resources:

Navigators Sabbatical Guidelines:

<https://docplayer.net/28916728-Freedom-to-renew-your-way.html>

Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs:

<http://www.cpx.cts.edu/renewal/apply/national-program>

Videos:

Trevor Hudson on *The Cycle of Grace*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0X6m_itTrsU

Find more in this series on You Tube (see the right side of your screen)

Christopher DeWelt on *Rest*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtHQgUULCRs>

Books:

Horsfall, Tony. *Working from a Place of Rest*.

Ash, Christopher. *Zeal without Burnout*.

Hudson, T. & Haas, T. *The Cycle of Grace: Living in Sacred Balance*.

Haley-Barton, Ruth. *Sacred Rhythms*.

Articles: *(for those with access to CT's digital archives)*

"What I Learned on my Sabbatical" by John Ortberg

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2010/september-online-only/learnedmysabbatical.html>

"To Abide or To Abound" by John Ortberg

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2000/spring/2.28.html>