

EXERCISE

Resting in the Hope of Christ

Sabbath is not only a time of rest for yourself and your loved ones; it should be a glimpse of the kingdom of God. This week, how can you offer the kingdom of God to those around you? How can you help others experience Sabbath rest?

- Contemplate Isaiah 61 as you consider the promise of Sabbath rest for God's people:

*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor,
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to grant to those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.
They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks;
foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers;
but you shall be called the priests of the Lord;
they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God;
you shall eat the wealth of the nations,
and in their glory you shall boast.
Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion;
instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot;
therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion;
they shall have everlasting joy.
For I the Lord love justice;*

*I hate robbery and wrong;
 I will faithfully give them their recompense,
 and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
 Their offspring shall be known among the nations,
 and their descendants in the midst of the peoples;
 all who see them shall acknowledge them,
 that they are an offspring the Lord has blessed.
 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord;
 my soul shall exult in my God,
 for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
 he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
 as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress,
 and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
 11 For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,
 and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up,
 so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
 to sprout up before all the nations.*

- As you prepare for your day of Sabbath this week, incorporate one way to enable someone else to experience the justice, goodness, and hope of Sabbath rest. Here are some ideas:
 1. Offer someone else babysitting so that they can experience rest this week.
 2. Take on work for someone else: mow their lawn, pick up groceries, anything that will help give them time and space to experience Sabbath rest.
 3. During your Sabbath time, write a note to someone who is suffering, offering them your prayers, encouragement, and hope.
- As you end your time of Sabbath this week, discuss these questions with your friends or family: What was the most difficult aspect of practicing Sabbath? In what ways did you experience this time as a gift from God? How can you continue the practice of Sabbath beyond these four weeks; what would need to happen?