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Sabbath as Gift and Delight: Annotated Bibliography

Calvin Symposium on Worship: Word, Music, Vision, Action

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Annotated Bibliography

“The Sabbath” Abraham Joshua Heschel

Farrar Straus and Giroux 1951

Any discussion of Sabbath keeping needs to begin with this book. It is foundational in laying out the need for balance between the world of time and the world of space. “In technical civilization we expend time to gain space.” He writes in the prologue. While this is a work of theology this concept is at the heart of the economic issues surrounding the loss of Sabbath time. If you can find it look for the FSG Classics edition which has an introduction by his daughter Susannah talking about the family’s Sabbath practices.

“Keeping the Sabbath Wholly” Marva Dawn

Wm. B. Eerdmans 1989

This book brought the issue of Sabbath keeping as a counter cultural challenge to our consumerist, high tech, commodified culture to the forefront. She understands deeply the socio economic issues that need to be addressed as part of Sabbath practice. Her story of deciding to keep her Sabbath even with make or break graduate school exams looming on Monday morning is one of my favorite Sabbath keeping stories.

“Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives” Wayne Muller, Bantam Books 1999

This is probably my favorite contemporary book on Sabbath. Wayne draws from broad cross-cultural materials to examine Sabbath keeping from a variety of angles. It is a wonderful overview and includes poetry from folk like Jane Kenyon and Wendell Berry. There

are practical suggestions and exercises that with Wayne's permission I have incorporated into my own retreat work.

“The Rest of God” Mark Buchanan

W Publishing Group, Thomas Nelson 2006

Written by a recovering workaholic pastor this is a wonderful specifically Christian Biblical approach to the topic. His expositions of the biblical texts on Sabbath are great. This is the book if you want to preach on the texts. Each chapter ends with a “Sabbath liturgy” which discusses practices that can be incorporated into your Sabbath keeping to enrich the time.

“Sacred Rhythms” Ruth Haley Barton

Intervarsity Press 2006

This book covers a variety of topics but has the single best chapter on Sabbath keeping I know. It has practical suggestions for getting started and is a great resource for retreats.

“Catch Your Breath” Don Postema Faith Alive 1997

This is a very fine introduction to Sabbath keeping, ideal for an adult church school class.

“Take Back Your Time” ed. John De Graaf, Berrett-Koehler

Publishing San Francisco 2003

This is an eclectic collection of essays on a wide variety of subjects around the issue of “time poverty” in our nation. It includes a chapter on the practice of Shabbat and essays by scholars like Juliet Schor and Benjamin Hunnicut. It looks at overtime, lack of vacation time and the over scheduling of our children's time to name just a few of the topics. There are lots of intersections for anyone serious about the need for Sabbath.