

# NORTH CIRCLE SABBATH GUIDE

**AUGUST 31, 2025**

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Sabbath is a gift from God to mankind. It is not a burden, or a heavy weight of rules. It is a simple rhythm that God gave us at the beginning of time: **Finish your work, Set the day aside, and Rest.** When we rest in God, it is a reminder to look back and look forward. We look back to the finished work of Jesus and forward to our future rest in Heaven. Most of the year we gather our church on Sundays because Jesus rose from the grave on that day. There is no better way to look back and point forward to Jesus than to gather with His people. 1 day in 7, we rest. We gather. We worship. We listen. We point others to Jesus. That is our usual rhythm of Sunday.

And that's also why we think it's important to encourage our church family to take Sabbath with our family and neighbors together away from the North Circle campus several times a year. We get a chance to break the monotony, rest from volunteering and making the gatherings happen, and reflect on who Jesus is and what He's done for us. ***This is a way for us to slow down and redeem the idea of rest!***

At North Circle Church, we have a simple vision: We are called to be the Church in Your Neighborhood. That means we want every neighbor in our circle to encounter Jesus! This will look different for every one of us, but the goal revolves around the same question: How can you help your neighbors find & follow Jesus? This calling requires us to slow down and focus on resting in who God is as well as being present with those in our circle.

## SCRIPTURES FOR REFLECTION & WORSHIP

*Choose from the following three topics given for personal reflection, or family/neighborhood worship. Ask God to speak to you through these verses and read them, expecting to hear from the Holy Spirit. If you are worshipping with others, be sensitive to whether believers or unbelievers will be there and plan accordingly.*

### SUMMER TEACHING SERIES - OUR FATHER // THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Read Jesus' words in Matthew 6:5-13** // Here Jesus gives us a roadmap to what prayer is and how we should go about doing it. It isn't about WHO sees us praying - it's about individual time pouring our hearts to God. It isn't about the AMOUNT of words we share with God - He's more interested in your heart and authentically sharing what's going on in your life (since He already knows!)

Take some time by starting with WORSHIP - tell God who He is - how good and powerful and holy He is. He doesn't need to be reminded, but sometimes we do! Then it's about SURRENDER - take a moment to acknowledge that you want HIS WILL and HIS KINGDOM to come to earth, instead of working for your own. Then we share DAILY NEEDS - asking Him for our daily bread. FORGIVENESS comes next - asking God to forgive our sin, and asking Him for help in forgiving others who have hurt us. Finally, we end by asking for

PROTECTION - from temptation, and the Enemy who is doing the tempting! Some earlier translations add onto this prayer: "For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." That's a great way to end your prayer to God!

### **LAST TEACHING SERIES - TRAVEL LIGHT - A GUIDE TO FORGIVENESS**

Each week of this series we took another step in this journey to discover what it means to travel light. We all know that life can get heavy sometimes. But we shouldn't drag around baggage we were never meant to carry. Traveling Light means to let go of the unforgiveness and bitterness we've been holding onto - let go to be free.

#### **PROMPT #1 / Psalm 103:12, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."**

Think about that for a moment. God removes our transgressions from us. He separates them from us AS FAR AS THE EAST IS FROM THE WEST. If you go north around our globe, if you fly far enough, eventually north will become south, and then south will become north again. But east and west are ETERNALLY distanced from each other. You could travel east FOREVER. I could travel west FOREVER. And God is saying that still isn't further than the lengths He goes to in order to remove our sin from us.

The actual etymology of the word forgive means "to take something and carry it away". The picture there is how Jesus took everything you've done wrong, and He carried it away so it doesn't have to weigh you down anymore.

#### **PROMPT #2 / If God's forgiveness is enough for the wrongs done BY you, then that means it can also be enough for the wrongs done TO you.**

Letting go is not some arbitrary - "forgive and forget" kind of a cliché, where you dismiss your hurt into oblivion and never bring it up again. It's actually realizing that God can't forgive without the cross, and neither can we. Because it's there where Jesus paid for everything wrong that's ever been done by you, but that's also where He paid for every wrong that's ever been done to you.

When you choose to let the cross be enough, it begins to lighten your load. It unlocks you from being frozen in that moment. You are no longer demanding for that person to pay for what they have done, because you realize that Jesus already paid for it. The key to traveling light begins by coming to the cross.

God's forgiveness was meant to CHANGE you. And remember, God wants this for you, but it's not about you either. This is a story HE is telling. The gospel is His means to restore not only you, but also the one who hurt you. Forgiveness is the way to give people around you a glimpse of what Jesus really looks like. It is the way to travel light.

#### **PROMPT #3 / Read the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant in Matthew 18:23-35**

Identify these steps of forgiveness in the story, and work this into your own forgiveness journey with the extra baggage you've been carrying:

*First*, name the offense.

*Second*, identify with the wrong doer.

*Third*, make the choice to absorb the cost.

*Fourth*, aim for reconciliation.

## **SABBATH IDEAS**

*Choose one or more of the following ideas to spend your Sunday. Be creative, think outside the box & mix and match!*

- **DON'T WORK** - Stay away from household chores, email lists, and even task planning. They will be there when you get back!
- **SPEND TIME IN GOD'S CREATION** - Go for a walk in nature and be fully present. Thank God for His Creation!
- **QUIET TIME WITH GOD** - Spend some time in the quiet to listen. Face the silence and any questions / fears that come up during that time, make sure to write them down. Take some time to talk to God and ask Him to direct your life.
- **LISTEN TO MUSIC** - For some of us, our hearts communicate best with music. Find a song or playlist that inspires you to worship God in that moment.
- **FUN WITH FAMILY / FRIENDS** - Take time to enjoy the company of the ones you love. Tell Stories. Laugh. Have some fun!
- **READ** - For some, reading is a great form of rest! Curl up with a good book & thank God for written communication!
- **GO TO CHURCH WITH A FRIEND** - Use this time to say "yes" to a friend who has asked you to go to their church. This is a time where you will not be volunteering or serving, and can instead ask God to just speak to you in the moment!
- **LABOR DAY COOKOUT** - Invite a family from your neighborhood over to your house for a meal. Be generous and love them with no strings attached!
- **VISIT** - Spend a few hours visiting residents of a nursing home or during visiting hours at a hospital. Share God's love by how you love others.
- **BLESS** - Randomly bless a family by leaving a care package at their door, ring the doorbell and RUN! **OR** Go into a restaurant / coffee shop and pay for the person behind you. **OR** Cook a meal with your family and then go deliver it to another family.

*WE ARE PRAYING FOR OUR ENTIRE NORTH CIRCLE FAMILY TO REST IN JESUS THIS WEEK!*