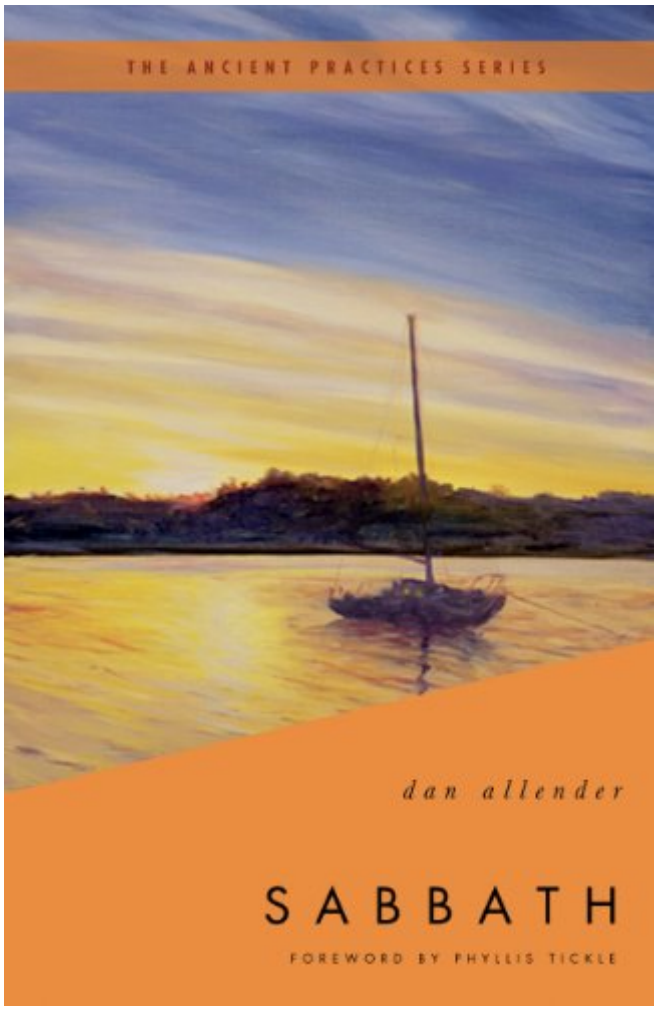
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Sabbath: The Ancient Practices



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Synopsis

What would you do for twenty-four hours if the only criteria were toÃ Â pursue your deepest joy?Dan AllenderÃ¢â ¬â„¢s lyrical book about the Sabbath expels the myriad myths about this Ã¢â ¬Å“day ofÃ Â rest,Ã¢â ¬Â• starting with the one that paints the Sabbath as a day of forced quiet, spiritual exercises,Ã Â and religious devotion and attendance. This, he says, is at odds with the ancient tradition ofÃ Â Sabbath as a day of delight for both body and soul. Instead, the only way we can make useÃ Â of the Sabbath is to see GodÃ¢â ¬â„¢s original intent for the day with new eyes. In Sabbath, AllenderÃ Â builds a case for delight by looking at this day as a festival that celebrates GodÃ¢â ¬â„¢s re-creative,Ã Â redemptive love using four components:Sensual glory and beautyRitualCommunal feastingPlayfulnessNow you can experience the delight of the Sabbath as you never have beforeÃ¢â ¬â •a day inÃ Â which you receive and extend reconciliation, peace, abundance, and joy.The Ancient PracticesThere is a hunger in every human heart for connection, primitive and raw, to God.Ã Â To satisfy it, many are beginning to explore traditional spiritual disciplines used forÃ Â centuries . . . everything from fixed-hour prayer to fasting to sincere observanceÃ Â of the Sabbath. Compelling and readable, the Ancient Practices series is for everyÃ Â spiritual sojourner, for every Christian seeker who wants more.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Incredibly helpful in re-thinking the Sabbath! I picked up this book in an effort to learn about self-care, and its contents have helped make the Sabbath a delight that I look forward to, instead of another chore I feel guilty for not doing correctly.The language can be a little hard to follow. It can be overly theological and not super practical at times. However, that shouldn't stop you from getting through it.

Dan Allender loves the Sabbath. That much is clear. I appreciate this. As one who does not observe Sabbath faithfully (at times I engage in outright rebellion), Allender's love for this ancient practice kindled my own. The Ancient Practices Series has had that tendency, as on the whole I have greatly enjoyed these volumes.Within this installment Dan Allender writes in clear, enjoyable prose concerning the practice of Sabbath. I devoured this book in a couple of days, and after I had put it down, I was eager to return. With three clear divisions (Sabbath Pillars, Purpose, and Performance), the reader is shown theological and biblical foundations for Sabbath observance, the reasons this practice has been given, and how this day can be most deeply enjoyed. Throughout his book, Allender quite thankfully avoids a bland description of Sabbath, and instead opts for the language of pure delight, play, and abundance. Allender also avoids legalistic prescriptions, and rather inspires the imagination for how Sabbath might be engaged with the totality of one's being.Despite the fact that I read this book quickly, and on the whole found it enjoyable, I did find it lacking in a couple of ways. First, this book did refer to the biblical foundations for Sabbath practice, most notably the fourth commandment. But as has been true of more than one volume of The Ancient Practices Series, I found the level of engagement with Scripture lacking. What significance did Sabbath practice have for the people of Israel? And, for those in the Christian community, in what way did Jesus challenge Sabbath practices and open up new possibilities for Sabbath observance among those called as his disciples? Such questions deserve attention, for the Scriptures serve as a foundational and critical narrative for the establishment of these practices in the life of the Christian person.As another critical observation, it was quite clear that Allender made a choice to avoid discussion of the Sabbath that focused too heavily on our need for rest in a world addicted to work,

hurry, and busyness, a move that took something away from the overall value of this volume. Though teachings on Sabbath commonly take this angle, the value in stressing rest as a gift to be received as part of our life rhythm clearly remains, and all signs within American culture (and perhaps others, but I speak from my location) tell us this lesson has yet to be learned. Allender does nod in this direction, but does not treat this aspect of Sabbath fully enough.Simply because Allender's love of Sabbath is contagious, I would recommend this book. The shortcomings I have noted do not outweigh the potential benefits this book could bring. Allender describes this practice as something to be cherished, and I believe that his description, in many ways, provides an uncommon lens through which to see God's good world that includes his gift of Sabbath.

If you long for life, read this book. Dr. Allender unravels misconceptions about God, Sabbath, delight, and the stuff of heart and life that war against it all. You'll be invited to explore the expanse of God's love and your heart as you engage the question, "What would I do for 24 hours if the only criteria were to pursue my deepest joy?" I recommend this book for anyone sapped dry by religiosity, longing to be saturated by the river of life Jesus promised would well up eternally from within.

Dan Allender's SABBATH (Thomas Nelson, 2009) is an invitation to practices that truly brings life. He first concedes that except for a few providential moments he may not be the person to write this text. Like many, in his drive to be successful in the hectic and harried world of academia, he let Sabbath practice fall by the wayside. Those moments, encounters across the world, a family emergency, and being lost in a sabbatical led to a changed heart. The book is part of a larger work from Thomas Nelson, The Ancient Practices Series, which seeks to reintroduce and reinvigorate the traditional spiritual disciplines of the church. To that end Allender succeeds.First, restoring Sabbath practice in a 24/7 web of connectivity seems like an endless and possibly fruitless battle. In my life I am only returning in later years to the life-giving practice of setting aside a day to rest in order to give meaning and energy to my work. Allender would commend my tentative steps and then he would introduce me to a larger Sabbath practice filled with sensuous delights, a time set-apart for God and family, a feast to be shared, and finally a day to play in God's presence. Allender never points to the Proverbs 8:30 where Wisdom celebrates God's unfolding creation and seems, like a young child, so say "do it again" as creation unfolds, but the wonder of Sabbath is on display throughout the book. Allender states that "Sabbath is the day that holds together the beginning of time and the end; it is the intersection of the past and the future that opens a window into eternity

each week" (p. 49). The simple practice of pausing every seven days leads us to pay attention to the larger unfolding of God’s redemptive work coming to consummation in an endless Sabbath.Then, Sabbath practice is grounded in the playful moments when division gives way to shalom, destitution surrenders to abundance, and despair yields to joy. These chapters yield a series of probing questions that will coach you as you deepen your practice. "How would you live if there were no wars, enmity, battle lines, or need to defend, explain, interpret, or influence another so see anything differently" (p. 110)? "If we were to pray today for our enemies, who do you most hope to be united with on this earth? And who do you most hope not to see in heaven" (p. 111)? "What would give you the greatest sense of the abiding goodness of the Father’s arms" (p. 112)? Allender’s chapter on despair surrendering to joy needs a moment of caution attached to it. He has obviously enjoyed a good cigar, a fine glass of wine, and wholesome beer on his journey. The onset of diabetes has limited his ability to enjoy this rituals. As a pastor I offer a caution to those whose sensitivities would see these practices as insensitive to the intent of Sabbath. I personally think Allender is right to point us to the take real delights of all of our senses.Finally, Allender moves us embrace the biblical vision of Sabbath: a remembering of the need for Sabbath after centuries of slavery in Egypt, the deliberate pause to listen for the still small voice, and reminding ourselves of God’s justice raining down on world thirsty for restitution and redemption. Here he offers a variety of practices, thoughts about ways to allow the scriptures to breath new life into us, and reminders of the God’s provision of welcoming all to the Sabbath as a matter of justice ("remember that you were slaves in Egypt" - Deuteronomy 5:15). Somehow sitting at the Sunday buffet and enjoying a feast with others within the church while others buzz about us caring for our needs hollows out Sabbatical intent. These last chapters contain many helpful thoughts that would reduce Sabbath practice to a series of rules, something many have chafed at throughout their lives. I think spending the first two-thirds of the book helping us learn to delight and play in the presence of God, family, and community should help us answer the question: "Do we really believe that Sabbath delight is God’s heart for us? Are we willing to silence the rabble of idols and foul spirits to hear the intoxicating joy of God" (p. 193)? Buy this book, ponder its Sabbath questions, engage God’s heart on a weekly basis, take time to stop and stand between the no longer and the not yet. You will be glad to find Sabbath taking up residence in your being.Disclosure of Material Connection: I received a copy of SABBATH mentioned above for free in the hope that I would mention it on my blog. Regardless, I only recommend products or services I use personally and believe will be good for my readers. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission’s 16 CFR, Part 255: "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

This author has some ideas about beauty, but his expression of them mostly resembles the pretensions of Frazier Crane. I found this book entirely unhelpful not only in engaging the Sabbath, but also in finding a single proposition to agree or disagree with.

as advertised

Really loved this new perspective on "Sabbath"! Our world would be truly a different place if more people honored the practice of Sabbath...

Dr. Dan has great insights such that you want to read, meditate and read again. It has blessed me and I will go back to it as a resource in the future.

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