WHAT AN EXPERT SAYS ABOUT SHABBAT/SABBATH:

Technical civilization is man’s conquest of space. It is a triumph frequently achieved by sacrificing an essential ingredient of existence, namely, time. In technical civilization, we expend time to gain space. To enhance our power in the world of space is our main objective. Yet to have more does not mean to be more.

There is a realm of time where the goal is not to have but to be, not to own but to give, not to control but to share, not to subdue but to be in accord. The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to holiness in time. It is a day on which we are called to share what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.

He who wants to enter the holiness of the day must first lay down the profanity of clattering commerce, of being yoked to toil. He must go away from the screech of dissonant days, from the nervousness and fury of acquisitiveness and the betrayal in embezzling his own life. He must say farewell to manual work and learn to understand that the world has already been created and will survive without the help of man. Six days a week we wrestle with the world, wringing profit from the earth; on the Sabbath we especially care for the seed of eternity planted in the soul. The world has our hands, but our souls belong to Someone Else. Six days a week we seek to dominate the world, on the seventh we try to dominate the self.

To set apart one day a week for freedom, a day on which we would not use the instruments which have been so easily turned into weapons of destruction, a day for being with ourselves, a day of detachment from the vulgar, of independence of external obligations, a day on which we stop worshipping the idols of technical civilization, a day on which we use no money, a day of armistice in the economic struggle with our fellow men and the forces of nature – is there any institution that holds out a greater hope for man’s progress than the Sabbath?

-- Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath*

Centuries of testing under the most rigorous of conditions have proven conclusively that Shabbat/Sabbath has no harmful side effects and is safe for people of all ages in unlimited doses.

Brought to you by the Office of Interfaith Campus Ministries.

Office of Interfaith Campus Ministries
Overholt House
1473 Beall Ave.
Wooster, OH 44691
Phone: 330-263-2602
Fax: 330-263-2534
A SEVERE CONDITION CAUSED BY THE ABSENCE OF MEANINGFUL REAL TIME IN YOUR LIFE

Fortunately, there is a cure for this condition — no thanks to the miracles of modern medical science. Its name is SHABBAT — “SABBATH.” It is one of the great insights of ancient times, preserved down through the centuries but, sadly, overpowered by modern consumer capitalism and its ethos of “more, more, more.”

Human beings are not made to run 24/7. Not only do we need sleep; we also need waking time in which we are not busy, either busy with work or busy with play.

Human beings need adequate time to… well, to be human. That’s what the Bible means when it talks about Shabbat, Sabbath, as a day of rest.

“But,” you say, “That was for when people were more primitive and everyone had to spend all of their time growing food. They needed rest. I can buy food whenever I want. I have plenty of time when I’m not working.”

That may be true — but did you know that our modern lifestyle, with all its technological convenience and opportunities for entertainment and amusement, is just as damaging to the human spirit as was the subsistence agricultural existence of ancient Israel? Did you know that work combined with an overdose of material enjoyment actually impedes the development of a healthy human spirit?

In short, did you know that being a modern person is not always good for you?

Once in a while you have to get out of that hamster cage. Once in a while you have to unplug the phone, iPod, computer, PDA. Stop IMing. Stop downloading. Hey — I see you! Stop talking on that blasted cell phone at least long enough to read through this flyer!

OK, that’s better. As I was saying… Shabbat/Sabbath used to be — still is, for some of us — a whole day’s worth of unplugging. (Or, if you’re an ox, unyoking. Animals get Shabbat, too.) Pretty cool. You ought to try it sometime.

But at the very least, if you really want to de-stress your life, try taking at least a small dose of Shabbat/Sabbath on a regular basis. Just follow these few simple recommendations:

SHABBAT/SABBATH
The Ancient Path to Sanity and Humanity

SMALL DOES FOR BEGINNING USERS

* Prepare and eat a meal with friends. Agree ahead of time to set aside enough time that no one has to rush off at the end of the meal.

Turn off all cell phones, computers, MP3 players, etc. — allow only face-to-face human conversation. Or singing.

Do this regularly with the same group of people.

While preparing, and especially over dinner, try to talk about serious things rather than ordinary matters.

* Take a walk in a park by yourself or with one other person. Don’t bring your cell phone, MP3 player, or any other technological item to distract yourself. If you are with someone else, try to talk about serious things rather than ordinary matters. Do this weekly.

* Read a book that has nothing to do with your work or with pop culture. Do this whenever you can.

* Don’t use going to the mall as a form of leisure activity. Only go shopping if you need something. Too much hanging out in the mall will counteract the benefits of Shabbat/Sabbath.