



## Discussion Questions for Sermon Based Home Fellowships

Week of February 10, 2008

Pastor Brian Long

Series: Biblical Ways of Being

Title: Being a Balanced people

Scripture: Genesis 2 and selected texts

### Opening Sharing

Interact with one another over the issue of getting the 8-9 hours of sleep that we need, and taking vacations that provide not only a break from work but also true re-creation of energy. How much sleep do you get on average? What was the most restoring vacation you have had? How can vacation or a day off bring renewal of spiritual life? The issue is how often do people make their relationship with God a part of the day or time of rest?

### Discussion Questions

Exodus 23:12: "You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but on the seventh day you must stop working. This gives your ox and your donkey a chance to rest. It also allows your slaves and the foreigners living among you to be refreshed. Pay close attention to all my instructions." This states a moral principle. Since most of us don't have an ox or donkey or slaves to rest, what is the principle that applies to our lives? [A history buff can go back to child labor laws and the early practices of the Industrial Revolution that abused the laborer.]

As the fourth commandment of the Decalogue, the Sabbath is given moral status and the requirement of obedience. It was this commandment that led to the establishment of the Seventh Day Adventist denomination that holds keeping the Sabbath (Saturday) is the test of true Christianity.

✚ Why do most Christians reject that concept?

✚ As a moral principle, what role does obedience play in this principle?

The pastor stated that because God knew that humankind would not rest, He commanded rest. Why are we driven? What are people seeking through 24/7 work?

Since a Sabbath suggests ceasing, which of the things Pastor Brian suggested would you find most difficult? Why?

- ✚ Cease from doing things that feel like work to you. Things that feel draining to you or don't feel peaceful or refreshing for you.
  
- ✚ Cease from thinking or planning productivity.
  
- ✚ Cease the compulsion to multi-task
  
- ✚ Cease the use of one or more machines or technologies
  
- ✚ Cease engaging with media. Television, videos, magazines or newspapers.
  
- ✚ Cease being primarily a consumer and focus on contentment

How do you plan to implement this challenge?

How does this summary statement of Isaiah 58:13-14 apply to us today? “Keep the Sabbath day holy. Don't pursue your own interests on that day, but enjoy the Sabbath and speak of it with delight as the LORD's holy day. Honor the Sabbath in everything you do on that day, and don't follow your own desires or talk idly. Then the LORD will be your delight. I will give you great honor and satisfy you with the inheritance I promised to your ancestor Jacob. I, the LORD, have spoken!”

Additional insights... [quotes from J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), 394-401]

The basis...for men's observance of the Sabbath (*shabbath*, “rest”)lies not in any desire or plan on the part of man, but rather in God's revelation of how He rested on the seventh day of creation (Gen. 2:1-3).... Its original purpose...was for man's sanctification to the Lord.

The Sabbath served two major functions. 1) As a matter of moral law, it guaranteed to men a needed day of rest from their labor: “Six days shalt thou labor and do all they work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto Yahweh thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work” (Ex. 20:8-10).... 2) The seventh day was to be observed as a perpetual [testimony]. Note: Payne argues that Ex. 20:16 is a definitive statement reminding God's people that they are separated to Him as His people, cut out of general humanity to be distinctly His. Psalm 95:11 gives the exalted status of entering into God's rest.