



24/6: A Prescription for a Healthier, Happier Life

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"Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy." Sounds nice, but how do we find rest in a 24/7 world? Just as the Hebrews were slaves in Egypt, we have become slaves to technology. Our technological tools allow 24-hour productivity and connectivity, give us more control, and subtly enslave us to busyness itself. Sabbath is about restraint, about intentionally not doing everything all the time just because we can. Setting aside a day of rest helps us reconnect with our Creator and find the peace of God that passes all understanding. The Sabbath is about letting go of the controls one day a week and letting God be God. So how do we do it? In "24/6," Dr. Matthew Sleeth describes our symptoms, clarifies the signs, diagnoses the illness, and lays out a simple plan for living a healthier, more God-centered life in a digitally-dazed, always-on world. Sleeth shares how his own family was dramatically transformed when it adopted Sabbath practices and helps readers better understand how their own lives can be transformed - physically, emotionally, relationally and spiritually - by adopting the 24/6 lifestyle.

24/6: A Prescription for a Healthier, Happier Life Details

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Any Length says

This is a very Christian book. It does talk about the importance of taking one day a week off.

However, it does not necessarily say for us to go have fun. It makes a big case of spending a part of this day with God. Prayer, reading the bible. meditation, etc.

I do believe in the concept and I am one of the generation who grew up with Sundays being "sacred family time with mostly nothing much on the TV and kids suffering endless boredom and you couldn't buy anything for love or money", to Sundays being erroded to "go shopping and spend every last dollar you have earned this week to make yourself feel better because you are living in a spritual void."

So why do I say this book is ok, and why do I not say it's great?

Because I felt there was an oversupply of bible verses and a lack of passion for that Sunday off.

I just didn't hear "my relationship with my kids is so much better". I didn't hear "my kids and my wife and I pray together". I didn't hear how to fill a free day without going out and doing things or going shopping that will be an equal thrill in people's lives, especially when they "haven't found God yet." To tell them to take a day off means they'll be bored be 9am and revert back to what they used to do. Which is switching on the TV and ordering pizza. Telling them to go to church and read the bible isn't going to cut it for most of them.

There isn't enough "meat" to fill a day. And most of them will feel that they now are under pressure to "shove and push" even more stuff into the other days so as not to have to go shopping or do the laundry or the cooking for next week on Sunday. We now work about 10 hours more than 25 years ago and with all the extra things we've "had to" put into our days through peer and social pressure we just do not have the time to take a day off. Most parents need to take this daughter to a friends birthday party, and that son to soccer practice. If they tell their kids they can't go because it's Sunday and it's the day off, they will be told they are depriving their kids. Social pressure will not let them mix with others and they will be ostracized.

Leigh Anne says

Refreshing, humorous, and thought provoking! Really enjoyed his scriptures and quotes at the end!

Emily says

The guy is an awesome writer. I picked this book up at a campmeeting since I wanted something to read for a week, and was already thinking along these lines. It turned out to be a great relaxing read even though it also brought up some very valid points that made me think. I've kept a sabbath each week my entire life, but I have been challenged to make this day even more of a "stop day" than I have before. God knew what He was doing when He made this pattern for us!

Scott says

Especially suited for workaholics who know they need to slow down. But this is more than just a treatise on getting more rest. It is about a life-change and commitment toward something (almost) no one values. It is also about faith ... faith that God will do more if you do less. And even though this is written from a Christian author, it is not "preachy" in its tone and I believe would be equally enjoyable and valuable for those not looking for a "Christian" book. The author is an ER doc and he artfully weaves tales and illustrations from his medical career into the book to make his points.

Lauren says

I read this book in anticipation of Dr. Sleeth coming to our church to preach on the topic of keeping the Sabbath. The book and his message were a welcome knock on the head, reminding me of the importance of setting aside a "stop day" to rest and reflect. Now I am taking measures to anticipate and protect my Sabbath, and I want to impress that on my kids also. This is a quick read, with humor and stories from Dr. Sleeth's career as an emergency room physician. I highly recommend it.

From 24/6:

"My Saturday "Stop Days" launched me on a journey toward the three Rs of Sabbath: rest, renewal, and reverence. In Sabbath keeping, we rest from more than our labors. We rest from the tyranny of the urgent, the staggering precipice of eternity, and the mundane workweek. In the Sabbath's renewal, we catch a glimpse of the divine. And our response to the divine is reverence."

Sarah says

A good book on a very important and often neglected subject. There were a few parts I found repetitive, but this book should be very helpful for anyone wanting to explore the subject. It isn't very long and I loved the index of scriptures talking about the Sabbath rest in the back very helpful.

Justin Tapp says

Dr. Sleeth lives in my hometown; I had heard about him after he spoke at a local church. He was once an overworked ER physician who discovered the Bible when he began taking his own personal sabbaths. There is no legalism in Sleeth's sabbath, no religious rabbit holes; he encourages you to take away the legalism and keep it grounded in Jesus. Sleeth encourages the reader to see how the sabbath reflects the character God. Jesus staked his ministry on the Sabbath when he showed that he works on it and says he is the meaning of it. Sleeth sees God's intent with creation in the biblical Sabbath rest.

Studies have shown that taking one day in seven to rest has significance for our minds and bodies. It helps us let go and recuperate. Get sleep, avoid materialism and the "rat race." Sleeth is encouraging everyone to take a "Stop Day" where you don't work and you do things that you only do on your Sabbath-- like read a particular book. He encourages the reader to do it as a family.

This is a simple book, simple idea. I give it four stars.

Luann says

Sleeth's book is good food for thought, but not much more in my opinion. It's subtitle, A prescription for a healthier, happier life should have been a clue that it was not going to be up my alley. He does include historical and biblical significance for the Sabbath, which is worth the read. He begins each chapter with a medical illustration--something I suppose I should have expected from someone bearing the initials "M.D." at the end of his name, yet as someone not medically-inclined in any way, shape, or form, I did not appreciate them. The book neither convicted me of any lack of personally keeping the Sabbath nor convinced me of his application of it, either.

There is legitimacy to the claim that not being on the go (especially career-related) 24/7 can lead to a healthier life. Also that the idea that taking time to enjoy relationships and perhaps a hobby or two brings happiness. Sleeth certainly did not side-step the spiritual aspect. And yet, not so large a mention as to merit placement in the subtitle. And what really is the Sabbath without the One who is Lord over it?

Tzippy says

From the Amazon description:

"Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy."

It's the only commandment that begins with the word *remember*...

Eeshk. What an embarrassing mistake.

But anyway, it's free on Amazon, and I'm kind of curious, so...

Drew says

What would it be like if we all took a day off each week to enjoy quiet time, relaxing, fellowship, and time with the Lord?

I know, sounds insane and impossible, right? After all, Mom and Dad both have full time jobs, and when they aren't at work, they have to be sure that the kids get off to school on time, that there is food in the fridge when they get home, that Timmy gets to soccer practice, that Emily doesn't miss ballet, that the house gets cleaned, and more. Often, if you're a Christian family, there's even more to do! You also have to be sure that the family isn't late for church, that kids get to the proper Sunday school classes, that Mom gets the event for Women's Ministry planned, that Dad's at Deacons' meeting, and that everyone remembers to read their Bible and pray each day.

All of this is on our plates, and you want us to drop everything and take a day – just - OFF?

Yep, that's the general idea. Silly, isn't it? Yet that is a very major part of the theme in Dr. Matthew Sleeth's

newest book, 24/6 (interestingly enough, when I just typed the book title, spell check underlined the number 6 with it's angry red perforations. Even computers seem to know these days that we are supposed to be going 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with no room for rest in between!)

All in all, I loved this book. I first became acquainted with Dr. Sleeth a couple years ago when I became convicted that I, as a Christian, should learn to appreciate and care for God's creation. As I stumbled across liberal blog after liberal blog about being a good treehugger, I started to become discouraged. Are there no Christians out there who appreciate the creation God has given us? I thought. It was at that time that I stumbled across the website of Blessed Earth (www.blessedearth.org) and felt encouraged. After discovering this Bible based organization that helps Christians learn about and live creation care, I read Matthew's first book, *Serve God, Save the Planet*. My initial thought was that the title sounded cliché, and – you guessed it – liberal. Still, I liked what I had learned so far about Blessed Earth, so I gave the book a shot, and I have loved Dr. Sleeth's writing ever since.

The premise of his latest installment is that Christians are called by God to observe the Sabbath. The Sabbath is to be a day of rest, a day of pursuing one's relationship with God (and if you feel those two ideas are mutually exclusive, you really don't understand the concept of having a relationship with the Jesus I know), a day of fellowship with family and friends, and a day of holiness. Is work a bad thing? Of course not. The Bible commands us to work and condemns laziness and idleness, but the God who created us also understands our need for time away from those things. He created the Sabbath for man because He created man with a need for a relationship with Him, as well as a need for rest. The biblical concept of the Sabbath is God's acknowledgement of both. When we remember the fourth commandment and live it the way God intended, the good that this will do for us and our relationships with the Lord will be a tremendous blessing.

I can already hear the objections: This is the legalism of the Pharisees! We are no longer under the Mosaic Law! We're now under grace! We don't have to keep those commandments anymore!

Let me state simply that it is not. One cannot get many pages into this book without discovering that Sleeth is careful to point out that he believes in following the spirit of the Law, not the letter of the Law. If the Pharisees could label something as work, it was not allowed on the Sabbath. In the teachings of Jesus, He is quick to point out that the Pharisees missed the whole point of the Law that was given in the first place. They constantly accused those who would help others on the Sabbath, but if one is in need, how are they to enjoy the Sabbath? How can they rest when they are going hungry, maybe even can't feed their children? What if they are sick? What if they just lost their home? Are we as Christians to say: That can wait until Monday? Of course not. If the idea behind the Sabbath is to focus on the first and greatest commandment, and the second which is like unto it, how can we sit back and watch a brother suffer and still enjoy fellowship with the Lord? We can't. It simply doesn't work that way.

We can, however, have a day where we skip sports practices and games, refuse to go to the office, put school work aside, and instead really rest and relax. Do minimal work around the house, read the Bible or other books, take naps when the urge hits us, watch that favorite movie or TV show, go to church and fellowship with friends and family, or go for a walk, sometimes just with the Lord, and sometimes with others as well.

I have to admit, I was an easy sell for this book. It has long bothered me to see Christians completely ignore this commandment and act as if Sunday (or whatever day they choose to observe as the Sabbath) is no different from any other day of the week. When I was in college, I began a regular practice of taking Sunday off from school work, cleaning my dorm, and other similar activities. At first this was difficult. I found myself bored on Sundays. It was also sometimes problematic because I started finding that taking a day off demanded preparation beforehand. This meant doing my studying and cleaning on Saturday, when others

wanted to go out and play until it was time to cram at the last minute. The boredom would occasionally get to me, I would finally cave and start cleaning or studying. After a while, I finally found myself giving up, and just treating my Sundays like I always had before: any other day of the week.

Soon after I went back to my old way of doing things, however, I found myself more worn out than ever, and as if I was truly missing something. My brain felt like it was on overload, and I had trouble finding peace and quiet which my mind and body needed desperately. I was also missing those wonderful quiet moments with the Lord. After I started taking one day a week, I noticed that some of my most special moments of fellowship with Him, or some of my most profound insights into scripture, came on or soon after Sunday.

With scripture, as well as personal experience in mind, this book simply rang true with me. I also appreciate Dr. Sleeth's writing style: easy to read, packed with scripture, and filled with personal anecdotes that are sometimes humorous, sometimes convicting, sometimes causing a variety of other feelings and emotions. After finishing this book, I would not hesitate to recommend 24/6 to anyone who wishes to learn about a biblical perspective on keeping the Sabbath.

Dkovlak says

This was a very good book about keeping the Sabbath.

This is one of the 10 Commandments, so it is a no-brainer that we must follow it.

The issue is how do we follow it?

This is the subject of many books and articles.

It is clear that it should be set aside as Holy to benefit God's children.

The author uses a number of personal examples. He was an Emergency Room Physician before becoming a Pastor.

He does not tell the reader what they **MUST DO** or **MUST NOT DO**.

Kjersti says

I understand the irony that I had to speed-read this to finish it and the other required reading before Annual Conference. I'm sure it deserves a higher rating, but I was really hoping that the author would eventually devoted more time to specific, creative ways of practicing Sabbath. While the foundation of the material was fascinating and new, and I appreciated the author's personal background, the applications were the same I've heard time and again. That doesn't make them bad. In fact, I am in agreement that Sabbath keeping should be a higher priority in my life. Yet in the end I was left a bit disappointed.

Nick says

I first heard about this book from Dr. Sleeth when I met him last year. When he told me that he was writing a

book about the Sabbath, I was intrigued and looked forward to seeing what he had to say on the subject. I wasn't disappointed. Over the years the concept of Sabbath rest has become more important to me and this book does nothing but educate and reaffirm why. This isn't a book written for scholars, but it is a book from which scholars could greatly benefit (take a break!). Fun. Easy to read. Filled with memorable quotes. This is not a "self-help" book, but rather it is a book about how God has designed His creation to take time to be Holy and rest in Him. This is a greatly neglected subject in church. Protestants are known for their "work ethic" not their "rest ethic." As Dr. Sleeth points out, "24/6 is not about working hard and playing hard. It is about working hard and stopping." Every year I'm at a loss for gifts to buy for Christmas. After finishing this book, things just got easier.

This book was provided to me by Blessed Earth in exchange for an unbiased review.

Jeremy Juliano says

I always weary of these kind of books, they usually take more forever to get through; I would rather read a story with a plot, but this was given to me as a gift so I wanted to reciprocate and read the gift. I thought the message was spot on with a lot of thinking I had come to on my own or have been tossing around in my mind. This book put thoughts together with solid day to day examples without laying a heavy guilt on you. I was able to blast through the book fairly quickly, for myself anyway. If you are a believer or not there is some real though provoking ideas to what it means rest and how we need it physically and mentally. I felt the book was a reaffirming voice of reason in my mind and well worth the read.

Bethany says

What I liked: I was challenged and encouraged by the overall message of this book, honoring the Sabbath, and enjoyed reading the lengths the author and his family went to do so (e.g. Cooking and cleaning the day before, not shopping or going out to eat that day, not even buying a last minute item needed for school the next day, etc). I especially liked the suggestions they had for families and look forward to using those if I have children. I also enjoyed reading the stories from his practice as an ER doctor. It was also a blessing to hear how the Sabbath actually led to the author becoming a Christian. Overall this book challenged me in a good way to put into place several habits and practices to truly honor the Sabbath, which I find myself and many other Christians neglecting on a regular basis, and described the benefits of doing so.

What I didn't like: While I enjoyed the ER stories, sometimes the connection between the story and the main point was a stretch or was too vague and not fleshed out enough. Also, when the author retold or referred to a passage or story from the Bible, he often changed the wording to make it more modern, but it ended up coming across as both cheesy and confusing. For example: 'Before the close of Mark's second chapter, Jesus melts an IRS section chief's heart, who then throws a party people are still tweeting about.'

(Huh? I have read Mark several times and still had to double check and then found out he was talking about Levi.)

Or when describing the scene of Abraham and the three guests: 'Sarah, make some bread. Don't use the flour from that soft grindstone; use the batch Lot sent for your ninetieth. And take the Cabot cheese out of the icebox so that it can warm up.'

As a reader, I get both offended and annoyed at writing like this. While I obviously was not alive in Abraham's time, providing some background on the time period and their practices would have been enough to keep me both interested and increase my understanding of the hospitality Abraham was showing and the reality of this scene (which let's be honest the crazy interesting part of this passage isn't that, but that God somehow shows up in these three people (as the Trinity?) and tells Abraham he's going to have a kid with Sarah even though they are super old). Instead the author rewrote the entire scene in a modern, anachronistic way that not only made it cheesy but lessens the story and makes it seem less real. In general I don't like it when authors change the language of the Bible to be more modern or 'relevant' (God is relevant and doesn't need our help to be so/if we don't find Him relevant the problem is with us). When they do so, it seems to show the authors think they need to change a description of a biblical story to fit our culture so we can understand it. I don't need to think of Abraham sacrificing the calf he was going to show in a fair or imagine them celebrating birthdays to understand this passage (especially since I didn't grow up rurally and have never shown animals). What I do need to understand this passage is a sharing of knowledge and teaching about this passage to help me know what this meant to the original readers and in its original context and how it fits into the entire narrative of the Bible that God is continuing today. The author did a nice job of practically describing how to live out that narrative by keeping the Sabbath and used the Scriptures to encourage us on the why and how to do so. I just wish he (and many other Christian authors/bloggers) would do so without retelling the Bible to fit it into our culture when the point of his book seemed to be the opposite, changing our daily lives to fit into the practice and culture of the Sabbath as described in the Bible.
