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4 Keys to Practicing Sabbath as a Church Leader

INSIGHTS FROM PASTOR RICH VILLODAS

Based on a webinar presented by RightNow Media. [Watch the full recording here.](#)

Many ministry leaders believe the next vacation will solve their exhaustion—but from what we've experienced, we know that's not true. We often return from time away as tired as we were when we left. What we need isn't another vacation. *We need to practice sabbath.*

1. Define Sabbath Biblically.

Sabbath isn't legalism (a list of dos and don'ts) or irrelevance (an outdated Old Testament practice). Sabbath is a 24-hour period without any "shoulds" or "have-tos," which, over time, should lead us into deeper rest and renewal.

2. Embrace the Four Movements of Sabbath.

According to Rich, healthy sabbath practice includes four essential elements:

- **Stop:** Step away from all your work, both paid and unpaid.
- **Rest:** Practice self-care and recognize your God-given limitations.
- **Delight:** Do what brings you joy and connects you to God and others.
- **Contemplate:** Worship, pray, and spend time with God.

3. Shift Your Mindset About Rest.

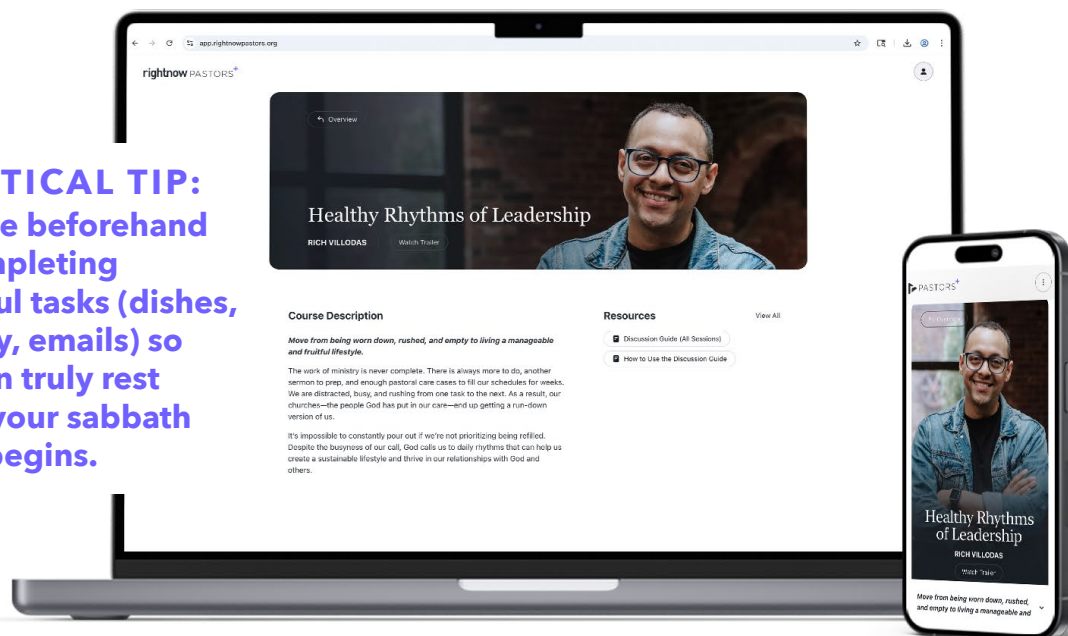
Many church leaders carry unhelpful beliefs about sabbath. In the webinar, Rich teaches:

- Sabbath is not a reward for hard work. It's a gift from God.
- Your work will remain incomplete. This doesn't make you a failure; it's a reminder of your humanity.
- Sabbath demonstrates God's grace. God loves you for who you are, not what you can produce.

4. Ritualize Sabbath, Don't Romanticize It.

Create rituals that make your sabbath feel distinct, like lighting a special candle or eating a favorite dessert. However, be careful of romanticizing your sabbath by expecting perfection. Only Jesus provides true rest (Matthew 11:28).

PRACTICAL TIP:
Prepare beforehand by completing stressful tasks (dishes, laundry, emails) so you can truly rest when your sabbath ritual begins.



Ready to find the rest you've been longing for? Check out Rich's course on RightNow Pastors+, *Healthy Rhythms of Leadership*. RightNow Pastors+ offers expert-led courses to train and develop your church leadership team. Learn more at www.rightnowpastors.org/plus.