**To Those Who Keep The Sabbath**

Hope Chapel Honolulu

Isaiah 56:1-7

4 For thus says the Lord: “To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, 5 I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. 6 “And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—7 these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.” (Isaiah 56:4-7, ESV)

**Introduction**

This year as we observe a Celebration Sabbath—intended to allow everyone who makes our weekly Sunday services a day of rest—it seemed good to the Holy Spirit for me to share a little more about why we have begun observing a Celebration Sabbath at Hope Chapel Honolulu. Of course, most of you will already know that the Sabbath has always been part of God’s eternal covenant (Exodus 31:12-17, Deuteronomy 5:12-15) and that it was intended to give everyone, including their slaves and their animals--a weekly day to rest, remember and give thanks for God’s creation and blessing in their lives.

**1. The Sabbath is a regular reminder of God’s power, love and faithfulness. (Isaiah 56:1-3)**

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 a) Keeping the Sabbath is integral to living justly and righteously in God’s sight.

 b) Keeping the Sabbath was meant to be a key identifier of God’s people.

**2. The Sabbath is a countercultural practice that rewards faith and trust. (Isaiah 56:4-5)**

 a) Keeping the Sabbath is arguably the key to both our vertical and horizontal relationships.

 b) The Sabbath is a sign of personal devotion to the LORD and intrinsically linked to God’s favor.

**3. The Sabbath is for all who would love and serve the LORD. (Isaiah 56:6-8)**

 a) The Sabbath is both a key element of Jewish culture and a supracultural element of Christianity.

 b) The Sabbath is more than a day of rest, it is the expression of hope in God’s promised future.

**Conclusion**

Do you associate keeping the Sabbath with God’s promise of eternal life, rest and reward as the writer of Hebrews does (Hebrews 4:6-13)? Arguably at least as important to the practice of faith in Christ as renewal, prayer, witness and submission, Sabbath observance is perhaps the most neglected element of the Christian faith. Far more than a day to attend church or rest from your work, the Sabbath is vital to keeping margins and not losing hope and direction in an increasingly fast-paced and performance-based world. How will you give God the time He desires and deserves in your life?

**For our prayerful study, discussion and application**

1) Read Deuteronomy 5:12-15 and talk about its meaning then and application in your life today?

2) Read Hebrews 4:6-13 and discuss the connection between God’s work and rest, and your own.

3) What are the Spirit and Word of God saying to you about keeping the Sabbath?

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