

# A Case of the SABBATH

*I knew I should  
love the Sabbath,  
but I didn't  
know how.*

**By Alyssa Nielsen**

**T**he scriptures say the Sabbath day is a holy day, a joyful and delightful day, a day of rest, a day to celebrate.<sup>1</sup> But a few years ago, while in my late teens, I found Sundays miserable. Instead of peace, I felt stress. Instead of joy, sadness. Instead of hope, guilt. I had a full-on case of the Sabbath blues.

Each Sunday morning, after an embarrassing amount of time hiding under my covers, I'd finally admit it

was indeed Sunday and get dressed for church. At church, I'd review my past week. During the sacrament, I would add up all my failures, never finishing before the first speaker got up. The rest of church became a battle of staving off tears as the guilt intensified with the new regret of feeling so rotten at church.

The afternoon was much the same. I'd feel guilt about past choices, stress about future choices, and sadness

about present circumstances. Without school and extracurricular activities to distract me, I would spend my time dwelling on negative thoughts.

After listening to, reading, and then re-reading President Russell M. Nelson's October 2015 general conference talk about how the Sabbath is a delight, I prayed for peace and love for the Sabbath rather than the misery I currently felt.<sup>2</sup> And an answer came.



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# BLUES

## Focus on Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ

I felt prompted to shift my focus from my woes to my relationship with Heavenly Father and the Savior. Rather than ponder my failures, I took time to ponder Their involvement in my life.

When negative thoughts came, I repeated to myself what I knew and believed about God and Jesus Christ: I am a child of God. He loves me. Jesus Christ is my Brother, and He atoned

for me. They want me to be happy and return to Them. The Sabbath is a gift from God.

I began to exercise faith in this testimony.

## Actively Accept the Sacrament

Changing my focus led me to also reconsider how I approached the sacrament. For so long I had treated the sacrament as time to punish myself. But that's not its purpose. The

sacrament is a sacred ordinance to renew our covenants. It is a chance to become clean again through the atoning power of Jesus Christ. Focusing on the ordinance and the covenant with faith and a repentant heart, I realized that the sacrament offered peace as I accepted the gift of forgiveness, kept my covenants, and received the Lord's Spirit (see D&C 20:77, 79).

Thinking of Christ's Atonement during the sacrament brought another gift to my mind. Not only could I be forgiven, but I could also receive healing because my Savior took upon Himself my pain and infirmities (see Alma 7:11–12). Through His Atonement and the sacrament, I could find peace and strength on the Sabbath—or on any other day—rather than stress and sadness.

And I found that peace. My Savior is there for me on Sundays and always!

## Practice Patient Faith

This wasn't a one-week fix. It was a struggle, and it took time. "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Romans 8:25). I kept working on my focus and praying to feel love for the Sabbath.

In time, I did find peace and delight on that holy day, but I couldn't quit there or I'd again slide into the Sabbath slumps. Each week requires diligent focus on the Savior and the purpose of the Sabbath, but I know the promise of peace and joy is true. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

## NOTES

1. See Exodus 20:11; Exodus 31:15; Leviticus 23:32; Isaiah 58:13; Doctrine and Covenants 59:13.
2. See Russell M. Nelson, "The Sabbath Is a Delight," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 129–32.