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How to Go On a Sabbatical

By Steve Dulin

1. Start preparing for the sabbatical about a week ahead of time. Begin to consciously slowing down your mind and thoughts so that you will be prepared to focus on the Lord rather than work, projects, issues, etc.
2. Bring plenty of paper, pens, pencils and/or highlighters.
3. Bring warm clothes. Fasting tends to make you feel colder than usual.
4. Try to do some type of fast during the sabbatical. Fasting makes your spirit more sensitive to the Lord. If possible, start fasting the day before your sabbatical as part of your preparation.
5. Drink plenty of pure water to flush out any toxins brought out by the fast.
6. As you start your sabbatical, pray over your room and dedicate the sabbatical to the Lord. Ask the Lord to come and ask the Holy Spirit to fill the room.
7. Try to keep your focus on the Lord. I avoid all newspapers, magazines and television. It is fine to bring a few books along, but it is usually best to keep them to a minimum. It is easy to get involved in reading a book and “lose” a lot of time.
8. Use this time to build your relationship with God. It can be beneficial to read books written by people who are further along in their relationship with the Lord than we are, so we can learn from them how to get closer to Lord. Once again, I keep this to a minimum.
9. Do not go into the sabbatical with a set agenda. Pray that God’s agenda will be accomplished. The purpose is not to get something from God, but to spend time with Him.
10. This is typically not the best time to do an in-depth bible study on a specific topic. It can be very time consuming and distract you from spending time with God and hearing from Him.

11. Keep outside contact to a minimum. I check in with my family once every two or three days and avoid outside conversations.
12. It is good to get out of your room periodically. I like to take a quiet walk once a day and sometimes walk at night. There is nothing wrong with doing an activity that takes your mind off the sabbatical as long as it is for a short time.
13. Create a blank “To Do” list at the beginning of the sabbatical. Anytime you think of a task that you need to do at work, at home, etc., immediately write it on this list so you don’t have to spend time thinking about or trying to remember it.
14. Ask the Lord if there are specific areas that He wants you to focus on during the sabbatical. I usually begin the sabbatical by asking the Lord to reveal to me any sin in my life that I am not aware of.
15. Bring or create a prayer list with specific needs in your life and in the lives of others so you can pray about them. I leave space to write down anything the Lord speaks to me about people and their needs.
16. For organizational purposes, I usually list on separate pieces of paper any topics in my life that I feel the Lord may want to address (Ex. Ministry, Relationships, Family, To Do, Work, etc. I place these pages into different areas of a binder so that each topic is easy to find when I need to write down things the Lord is saying. I also have a general topic entitled “Sabbatical (Year)” where I can write anything the Lord says that is not under a specific topic.
17. Ask the Lord what He wants to do in the coming year and then use the results from your sabbatical as a guide to keep you on course until your next sabbatical.
18. Do not strive to hear the Lord. Submit your will to His will and ask Him to speak to you and direct and guide you. Ask Him to give you revelation as you read the Word. The Lord wants to speak to you more than you want to hear from Him.