**ARTICLE ON SABBATH**

It happens every time I ask a group of youth workers, “How many of you take a weekly Sabbath day?”

Over the laughter, I hear,

*“Yeah right!”*

*“What’s that?”*

*and (my personal favorite)*

*“Are ya living in Lala Land?”*

But it’s there, right before commandment number five (B-4 Five): “Six days you shall labor,…but the seventh day is a Sabbath…On it you shall not do any work” (Exodus 20:9-10). We’ve got plenty of excuses for not keeping this command, but they all reveal our unwillingness to trust that God just might work when we are not.

It’s time for a change of thinking in youth ministry when it comes to Sabbath:

1) **From Hours to Rhythm:** Never in Scripture is the 40-hour work week or the 8-hour day commended. What Scripture is clear about, though, is that we are to put our bodies in rhythm with the way they were designed—the rhythm of 6 days of work and 1 day of rest, 6 days of unapologetic engagement and 1 day of guilt-free disengagement.

It’s time to acknowledge that 16-hour days in youth ministry will unavoidably happen and that the kingdom might be much better served if we stopped complaining about them.

2) **From Anti-Busy to Anti-Trivial:** There is today a cottage industry of lament around busyness in youth ministry.  But it’s far too easy to give blanket condemnation to all busyness. Busy is not the problem. Not living by our deliberate priorities is a problem.

I’m pretty sure that Mother Teresa was busy, but I’ll bet she took a Sabbath day and found time to pray. For me, making time to pray, to be with my bride, to invest in my children, and to stay connected to my parents makes me more busy, not less. The question is “What are we busy doing?”

3) **Embrace Breathlessness AND Balance**: In five days I’ll be running 26.2 miles with 20,000 of my closest friends in the Memphis marathon. Around mile 22, I’m pretty sure I’ll be just a smidge “breathless.” There’s nothing wrong with running at a breathless pace, as long as that pace is balanced by appropriate periods of rest.

God’s provision of a weekly Sabbath offers an alternative. Churches, young people and families don’t need any more breathless workaholics, but neither do they need under-functioning leaders who justify their trivia addiction because they are “working so many hours.”

Sustainable, durable youth workers have learned the secret combination to longevity in this work: B-4 Five.

Articles like this can be found on Mark DeVries’ blog, [The Sustainable Life](http://markdevriesblog.com) at <http://www.MarkDeVriesblog.com>.

An adaptation of this article first appeared in 2008 in [Group Magazine](http://groupmagazine.com) at http://youthministry.com/group-magazine.

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