



'Worship at home'

August 24th 2025

We come to worship God
who is always faithful.



Opening based on Psalm 71

With great rejoicing we come to worship God!

God is our shelter and our refuge.

May the power of God's Holy Spirit be with us,

as we place our trust and our hope

in God's protection and love.

Come, let us worship the Lord!

Let us celebrate the presence of God

here in this place and in all our lives.

Let us worship and praise God!

– adapted from Worship Connection

AMEN!

<https://www.ministrymatters.com>



Do you try to do the right thing, and keep the rules, no matter what? Or do you like to push the boundaries, and see yourself as a bit of a rebel to challenge or make others think?

Rules matter. They keep us safe. They help us and others know what the expectations are, and how to behave in relation to each other and to our world. Imagine what would happen if we had no road rules! However, sometimes we forget that rules are in place to help us live well, and we make the rules our focus... they become the end, rather than the means to an end.

In Jesus' time, there were strict Jewish rules about how to live, based on the Exodus account of the Commandments given to Moses on Mt Sinai. These included a rule to keep the Sabbath day holy. No work was to be done: the Sabbath was a time to stop and rest, allowing the whole household, including slaves, to rest also. It was an opportunity to worship, pray and spend time together without the distractions, busyness, and hardship of everyday life. Sabbath was an important part of Jewish identity.

Luke 13:10-17

One Sabbath Jesus was teaching in a synagogue. A woman there had an evil spirit that had kept her sick for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called out to her, "Woman, you are free from your sickness!" He placed his hands on her, and at once she straightened herself up and praised God. The official of the synagogue was angry that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, so he spoke up and said to the people, "There are six days in which we should work; so come during those

days and be healed, but not on the Sabbath!"

The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Any one of you would untie your ox or your donkey from the stall and take it out to give it water on the Sabbath. Now here is this descendant of Abraham whom Satan has kept in bonds for eighteen years; should she not be released on the Sabbath?" His answer made his enemies ashamed of themselves, while the people rejoiced over all the wonderful things that he did.

Good News Bible

By Jesus' time, the Sabbath law was interpreted differently by different Jewish sects. There was an ongoing debate among rabbis and other teachers of the law about what could and could not be done on the Sabbath. It seems that for this leader it was clear: Jesus was not to heal on the Sabbath. He placed great importance on this rule.

Sometimes we too have traditions or "rules" which are important to us. Some of these rules and traditions give us good boundaries and healthy ways of being God's people together. Others have become entrenched as the focus of our lives and are perhaps restrictive rather than life-giving.

Think about the unwritten "rules" that guide your life.

**Which of these are life-giving
and help you and others flourish?**



Our church communities also have traditions and “rules” on which we place great importance. Do you always stand for the offering? Do the children go out to Sunday School? Has worship always been at 10am on Sunday morning?

Think about the unwritten “rules” of your congregation or faith community?

Which of them are life-giving and help you and others flourish?

Which are traditions that have become entrenched and could be left behind?



Jesus acts out of compassion, not bound by rules and traditions. Jesus reminds us that love, rather than rules, brings fullness of life. In healing this woman, Jesus offers her a new way of being, and affirms her as a *descendent of Abraham*, a child of God. *At once, she straightened herself up and praised God.* She leaves behind that which has been binding her and finds new life.

Each of us have things which weigh us down. It might be a burden, an ailment, a painful memory which binds us and stops us from being all that we might be. We are each in need of healing – none of us are completely whole and perfect physically, emotionally and spiritually. Jesus offers each of us release from that which is holding us down, as in his love and grace we find new life, as children of God.

Prayer

Gracious, loving, amazing God,
you love each of us personally and intimately,
and you offer us life in abundance.
Your love, your grace and your power
go far beyond anything we could ever imagine.



You offer us healing and wholeness,
yet too often we hold onto our old ways
which we find comfortable and secure.
You give us Sabbath rest,
yet we fill our days with busyness and distractions,
distancing ourselves from you and from each other.
Bring us back to you, loving God,
that we might accept your love and your grace for ourselves,
and find fullness of life, in you. Amen.



The Sabbath was a day to worship and pray, to be nourished and sustained, to find restoration and wholeness. Perhaps Jesus did not heal this woman *despite* it being the Sabbath but *because* it was the Sabbath!

The Hebrew word for Sabbath is *shabbat*, which means simply to stop. Stop and rest. The world will continue to turn without you. God is God and you are not. The world does not depend on your busyness. Find some time to just stop.

Spend some time now in quietness.
Slow your mind
and focus on your breathing.
Know God's love holding you.
Feel affirmed as a child of God.
Know that Christ is with you,
offering wholeness
and a new way of being.

It's impossible to seek and
find the abundance God
has to offer us when we
fail to pause and allow
ourselves the opportunity
to be restored.

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How might you build times of Sabbath into this next week?

Closing

Hear again this good news: God in Christ frees you from whatever binds you; God gives you rest; God forgives you and frees you to live life, and to live life abundantly. Go in peace, giving glory to the one who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us. To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.