



AppleTree

Participant Notebook

AppleTree Participant Book

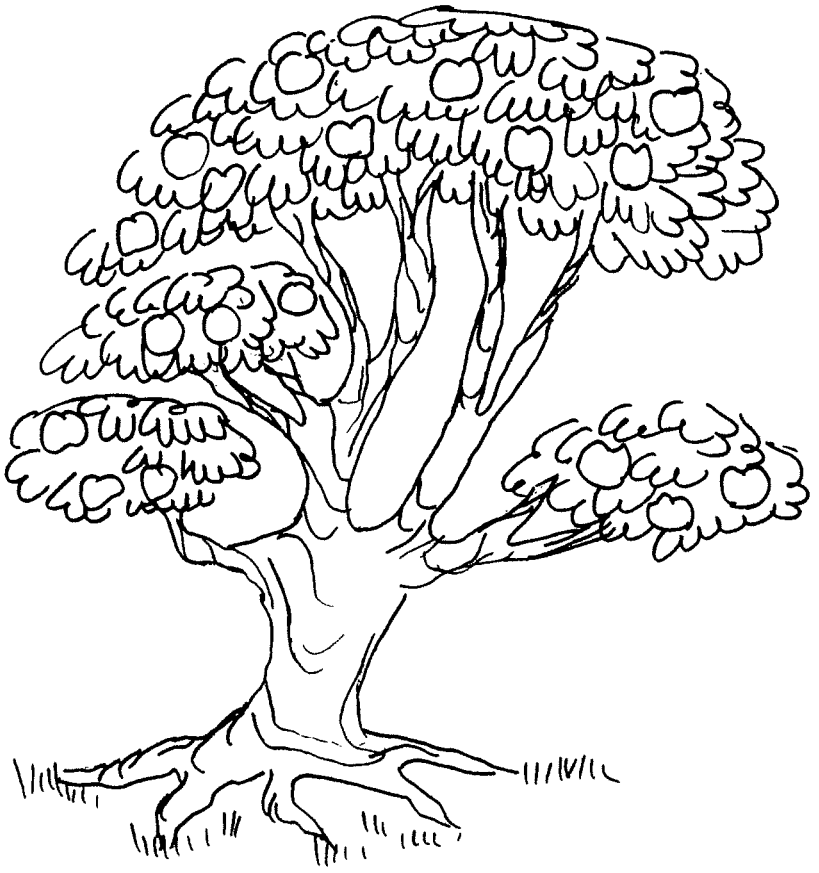
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A stewardship renewal resource for congregations.

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Apple Tree

Participant Book

Welcome

This participant book is your key to a successful encounter with the AppleTree process, offered to you as a part of your congregation's stewardship ministry. You can make this experience enjoyable by scanning the contents of this booklet and completing the section, "AppleTrees are People, Tool!" before the AppleTree retreat.

Your congregational leaders have chosen this process as a way of bringing stewardship into your life in a way that adds value to what you do every day. With the retreat leaders they offer thanks to God for your lively personal stewardship, and commend you to God's continuing care.

*Variety
is the mother
of enjoyment.*

Benjamin Disraeli

About AppleTree

AppleTree: A Vitality Process for Busy People is an asset-based approach (not a needs-based approach) to life.



AppleTree respects each person's reality, and does not impose a system of time management.

AppleTree is about vitality and energy, not about "simple living."

AppleTree is about faith in life, and life in faith, not about technique(s).



AppleTree is for busy people - not to make them less busy, to make them feel guilty or to give them more hurdles. AppleTree helps them celebrate their assets, choose their priorities, find spiritual support, enjoy their lives and worship God.

Apple Trees Are People, Too!

Participant Pre-Work

Directions: Complete the following items before the AppleTree event, answering as fully as possible each question or prompt. You will share some of what you have written as part of the retreat experience.

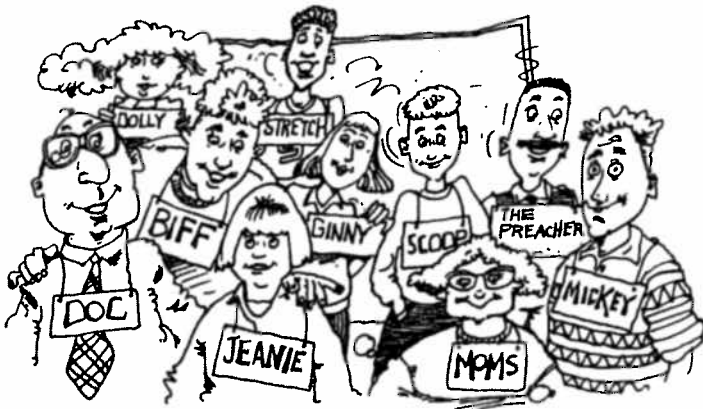
My Strengths

I am who I am.

I am the way God made me.

I am, like all of God's creation, very good.

I look into the mirror. My eye color is _____. Today my eyes look _____. But if you could see behind my eyes - into my soul, even - you would see a person whose strengths include:



My History

*My life is part of God's story.
My history is still being written
Because God is still shaping my life.*

The story of my life is a history of high points and low spots.
My history could be titled, " _____ "
and would be a story characterized by these features:

Some of the memorable events that are high points: _____



Some low points in my history that I recall:

My Gifts

*I have gifts,
God-given assets.
Sometimes more than I can count.*

Whether they're abilities, talents, gifts or assets, God has given them to me for my stewarding. They're positive elements of my life, and so I name them:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Sometimes other people have named my gifts with these names:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

My Relationships

*I am loved and love in return.
These relationships I cherish.
They're gifts from God.*

All around me are people I name as those who love me, and who I love. Sometimes I'm overwhelmed by this part of my life. If you could see me being thankful for my relationships, you'd see these names, these people that God graces my life with:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

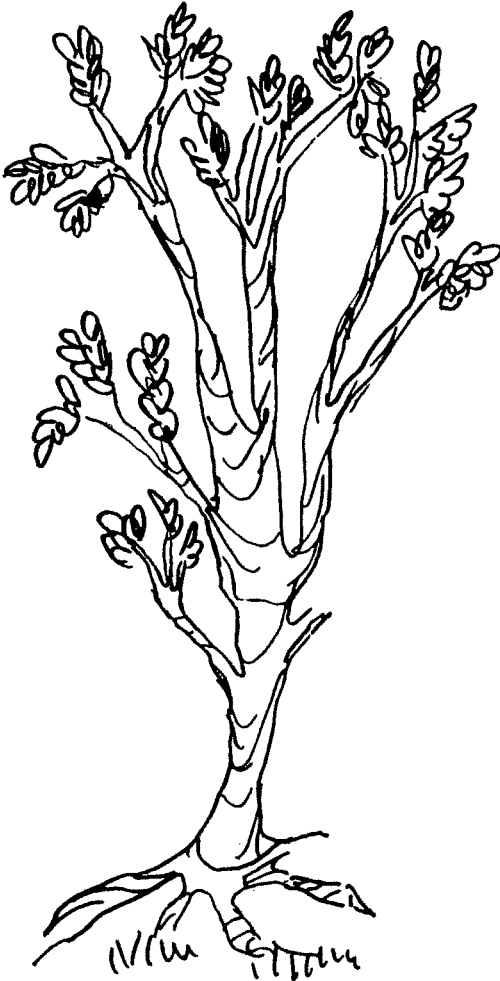
Sometimes God graces my life with people who challenge me:



The Basic Metaphor I

The AppleTree process gets its imagery from apple trees. (Are you surprised?)

An orchard of apple trees needs annual care. Young trees grow quite naturally and even start to bear fine apples. But in a few years their branches multiply. Some get entangled with others. Others get so little nourishment that they become weak and unable to bear weight. Worst of all, the nutrients that are devoted to multiplying branches may rob the fruit of its necessary energy. The end result: You get little apples!



Some would suggest that the solution to the problem of little apples is to wish you had an orange tree instead! That's an example of "needs-based thinking." (We have a big problem here, and we need to solve it in a big way.) "Asset-based thinking" says, "No, we want this tree and we want it to bear large, beautiful apples!"

Others would suggest that cloning only the "most successful" apple trees could solve the problem of little apples. But think of the tree's point of view: What if you're not the "successful tree?" Do you have to deny your reality, learn someone else's system, become something/someone else?

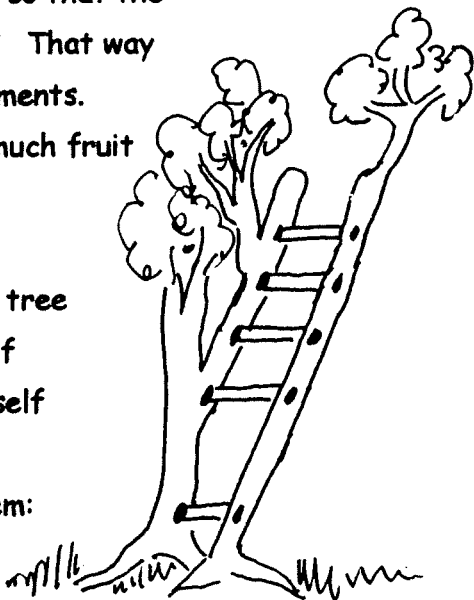
Let's hope not!



The Basic Metaphor II

So how do we solve the problem of the overgrown apple tree? Some would suggest the solution of "simplicity." Just prune all the branches so that the tree looks like a fence post! That way you won't have any entanglements. (One problem, though: not much fruit comes from fence posts!)

Another solution: Prune the tree so that it takes the shape of a ladder, and then lift yourself by your roots and climb to heavenly bliss! (One problem: you have to have the right technique!)



*No great thing
is created suddenly.*

Epicetus

The Basic Metaphor III

There is a solution better than the previous two, a way of pruning trees carefully. Those who care for apple trees prune so that they don't cut away the assets of the tree, its capacity to produce fruit. They lop off branches, alive and dead, that limit the growth of other branches. They snip off entangled twigs. Their pruning yields a strong structure, and most of all, they prune so that the tree grows many fine, large, tasty and beautiful apples.

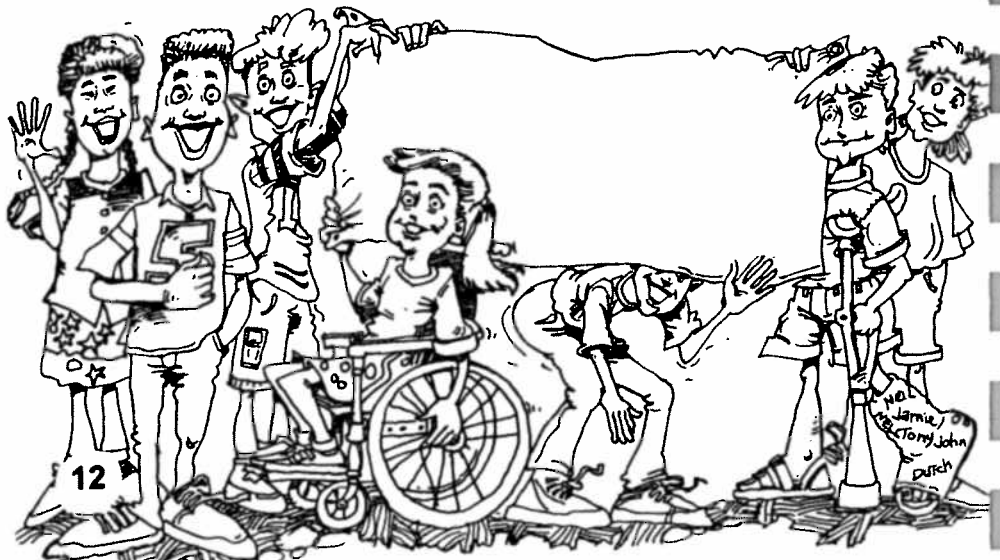
*It is indeed foolish
to be unhappy now because
you may be unhappy
at some future time.*

Seneca

Applying the Basic Metaphor

Here's how the apple tree metaphor makes sense for your life, and here's how it connects to the AppleTree seminar:

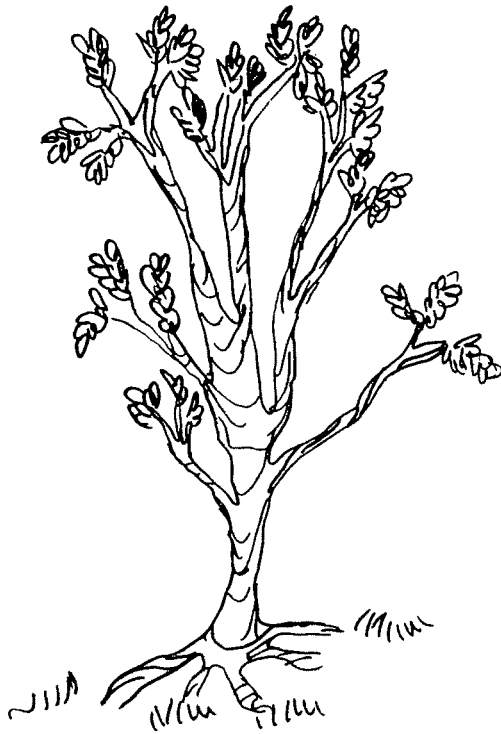
1. The AppleTree seminar is about a careful kind of personal pruning.
2. When you prune, you are seeking vitality and joy.
3. What the seminar offers is a way of acting and thinking that leads to fulfillment and possibility.
4. The AppleTree experience is about God's abundance and its presence in your life.



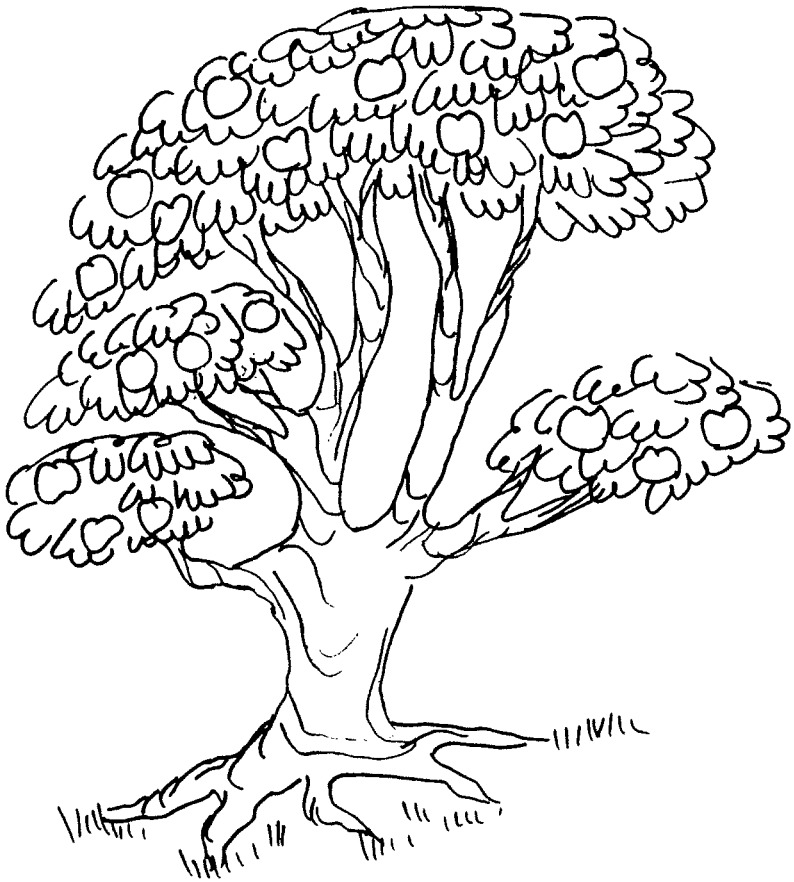
Orchardist's Manual: About Apple Trees



**Apple trees start out
looking very simple.**



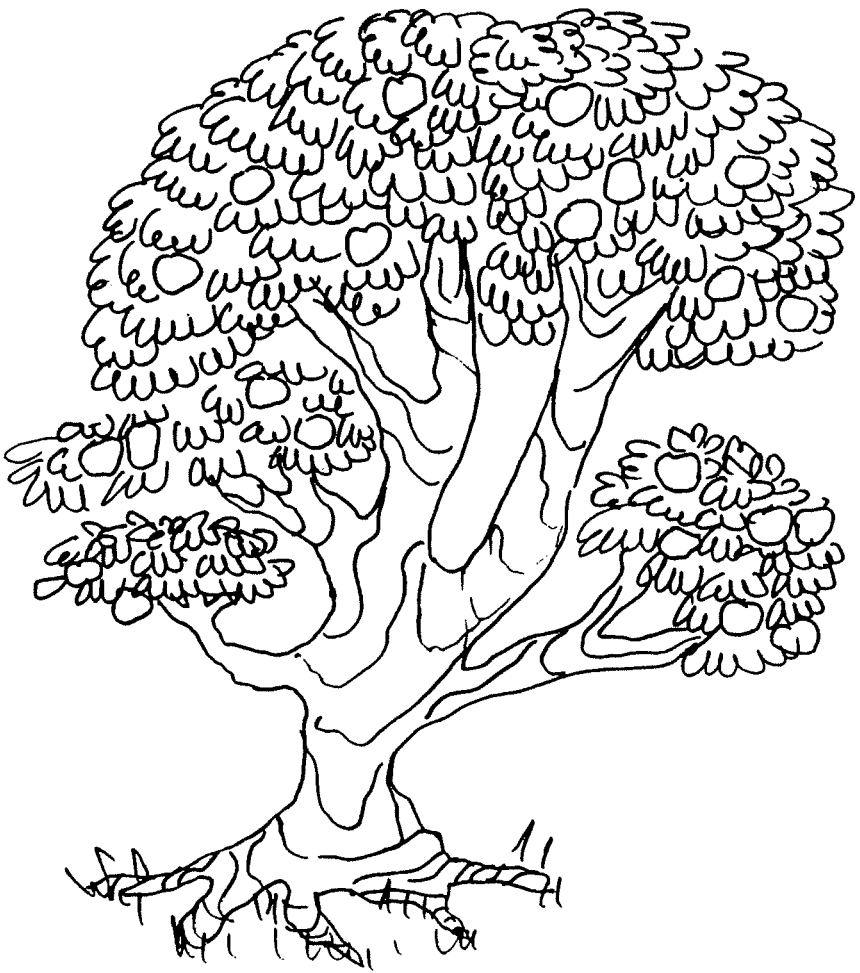
Then they grow a few leaves
and a few more branches.



**And before long,
they are big trees
with many leaves
and lots of apples.**

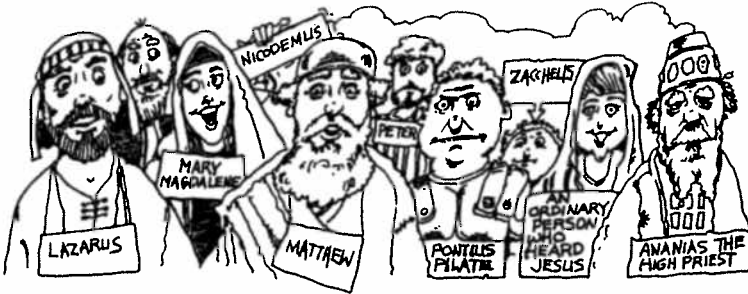


**And then an apple tree will
get so overgrown
that it's a jungle
with many TINY apples.**

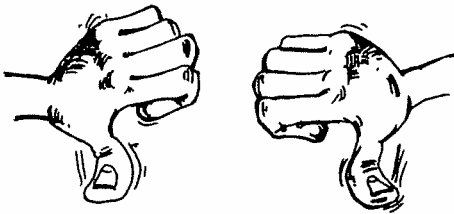


**Apple trees need to be pruned.
Orchardists prune to make
a strong framework
with just the right amount
of fruit-bearing spurs.**

Virtually Visual Devotions



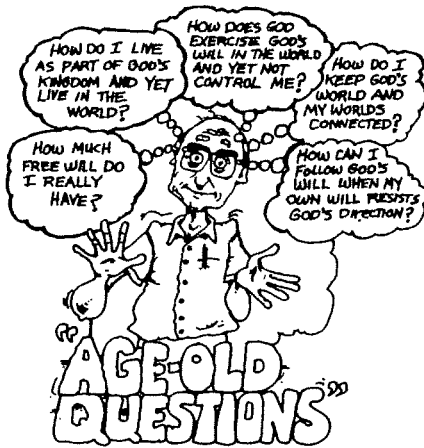
The Apple of God's Eye
(Deuteronomy 32:10; Zechariah 2:8)



NO
TROUBLE
HERE!
(Joel 1:12)

Hidden
in the Shadow
of God's Wings
(Psalm 17:8)





Stored-up Commandments (Proverbs 7:1-2)

**May God who delights in us
lead us to delight
in God's life-giving word.**

We pray:

Creator God, we praise you and honor you and bless your holy name. Touch our hearts and make us receptive to your life-giving word. Empower us to take care of ourselves as you take care of us. Lead us to worship you with our Sabbath rest. Be with us in the hours ahead. We pray in the name of Jesus, and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Whose Responsibility Is It?



Most of the time you want to be "responsible," and sometimes you *really* take this idea seriously. Right? Is it possible that sometimes you might confuse your sense of responsibility - its sources, size, direction, results - with something else? And where does "self-love" interact with responsibility? AppleTree can help.

Directions: Draw quick thumbnail sketches of individuals who fit these descriptions in your overall sense of responsibility. Hint: Draw as many as possible in the time you are given.

People I Am Responsible TO . . .



People I Am Responsible WITH . .

People I Am Responsible FOR . . .



The Responsibility Test

Directions: Complete the test on these two pages by circling either TRUE or FALSE on each of the following items to indicate your basic feelings about each application of "responsibility" to your life. In later segments of AppleTree you will have an opportunity to talk about your responses to these items. There are no wrong answers. You will have five minutes to complete this "test".

- TRUE FALSE 1. I am responsible for my spouse's happiness
- TRUE FALSE 2. I am responsible for my child's safety.
- TRUE FALSE 3. I am responsible for my child's success.
- TRUE FALSE 4. I always do what I want to do.
- TRUE FALSE 5. I am responsible to my friend(s).
- TRUE FALSE 6. I am responsible with my spouse.
- TRUE FALSE 7. I am responsible for my adult friend's salvation.
- TRUE FALSE 8. I am responsible for my aged parent(s).
- TRUE FALSE 9. I am physically prevented from doing what I want to do.
- TRUE FALSE 10. I am responsible for my child's happiness.
- TRUE FALSE 11. I am responsible to my supervisor.
- TRUE FALSE 12. I am responsible for the happiness of a critically-ill family member.
- TRUE FALSE 13. I seldom do what I want to do.

- TRUE FALSE 14. I am responsible for myself.
- TRUE FALSE 15. I find it easy to change the dynamics in a relationship.
- TRUE FALSE 16. I am responsible for my loved one's health.
- TRUE FALSE 17. I am responsible for the way our family looks when we are in public.
- TRUE FALSE 18. I am responsible for the feelings in my congregation.
- TRUE FALSE 19. I am responsible for the success of my organization's next big event.
- TRUE FALSE 20. People who are comfortable like to change.
- TRUE FALSE 21. I am responsible for the harmony or lack of harmony in our home.
- TRUE FALSE 22. I am responsible for my supervisor's feelings.
- TRUE FALSE 23. I am responsible for the safety of my aged parent(s).

*Habit is habit,
and not to be flung
out of the window . . .
but coaxed downstairs
one step at a time.*

Mark Twain

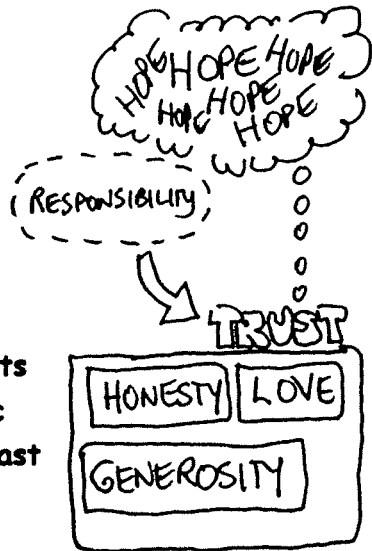
Responsibility Freedom

On the preceding pages you reacted to these four statements:

- I always do what I want to do.
- I am physically prevented from doing what I want to do.
- I seldom do what I want to do
- I am responsible for myself.

Review your true/false answers to these statements and use the following page to complete one of the following tasks:

- Make a "Values Map" that shows the values or beliefs that unify your responses. (Hint: Use circles and arrows and captions.)
- Copy one of the four statements that is the most characteristic of your beliefs and write at least five answers to the question, "Why is that true of you?"
- Briefly outline the story of an event in your life that illustrates how your answers make sense together.



We will either find a way or make one.

Hannibal

Sabbath Communion With God

What moves your soul into communion with God?

- Is it pure worship - praise, prayer, listening?
- Is it some form of contemplation alone?
- It is reading or study of the Bible?

**How much time do you need
for Sabbath rest?**

- The whole day?
- What parts of the days?
- Five minutes? An hour?
- When will this happen?



**Where will you find a place
for Sabbath with God?**

- A familiar place made new?
- A new place for this new activity?
- A place close by or a place far away?

Who will accompany you, or will you be alone?

- Those dear and near to you?
- New friends?
- Only memories and thoughts of others?

What will you stop doing so that you have a time and place for Sabbath rest?

- Things that are unimportant but urgent?
- Matters of non-urgent importance?
- What you falsely cherish as necessary?

(How) will you tell your family or friends what you are doing?

- Will you not tell them for their own benefit?
- Will you let your actions speak for themselves?
- What words will you use?

How will you ensure that you do not fail in this endeavor?

- How will you achieve balance in this matter?
- What/who will strengthen or encourage you?
- How will you know if "Sabbath" is working well?

How much do you trust God and God's providing?

- Where else in your life do you trust God's power?
- How do God's gifts comfort your soul?
- How can the Holy Spirit engender trust in God?

What will be the power of this quiet time with God?

A Sabbath Journal

Day One

I Will Name This Day: _____

The Events of This Day:

The Quiet Rest in This Day:

How Sabbath Surprised Me This Day:

What I Want to Remember About This Day:

Day Two

The Name of This Day: _____

The Elements of This Day's Blessings:

One Moment/Time of Sabbath Rest:

Who I am Most Like:

A Story About
Today's Best Moment:



Day Three

If Today Was a Song, Its Title Would Be:

Because of today, tomorrow I will hum: _____

God sang to me today because of: _____

In moments of Sabbath rest, I sang to God about: _____



Day Four

This Day Will Be Called: _____

Today was like: _____

Today God slowed me down and quieted me down when: _____

Today I found energy to/for: _____



Who will come to mind as my "teacher" today:

Who gave me a gift today, for which I cannot repay him/her: _____

Day Five

If Today Was a Romance, Its Title Would be: _____

Today God's love came to me when: _____

The Moment Today I Realized How Deeply I am Loved by Others: _____

Today I was Given The Gift of: _____

*When spider webs unite,
they can tie up a lion.*

Ethiopian Proverb

Day Six

Today's First and Last Name(s): _____

A Symbol of Today's STOP! Sign From God:

The Smallest Time of Sabbath Today:

The Biggest Chunk of Sabbath Today: _____

The Differences/Similarities Between Them:

*Shared joy is double joy,
and shared sorrow is half sorrow.*

Swedish Proverb

Day Seven

If This Day Was a Member of My Family, Its First Name Would Be: _____

God's Purpose for Me This Day Might Have Been To: _____

What Most Affected My Soul This Day: _____

The People God Placed Into This Day as a Blessing:



Tonight I (Will) Thank God Most for: _____

Day Eight

If Today Was a Tool God Gave Me for My
Life, I Would Call It: _____

The Work God Called Me to do Today: _____

The Part of the Work God Did: _____

The Part of the Work I Did: _____

*Do what you can,
with what you have,
where you are.*

Theodore Roosevelt

Day Nine

Today's Name: _____

One Way in Which God Quieted My Soul

Today: _____

God laughed with me today when: _____



People who gave me the
gift of fun or humor

today: _____

My prayers at the end of the day will include:

Day Ten

I will call Today: Tenth-_____ Day

The Smallest Evidence of God's Overwhelming
Grace Today: _____

How I Was Able to Notice It: _____

How God Graced _____ Through
Me This Day: _____

How I Was Able to Notice It: _____

Day Eleven

Today's Secret Name: _____

An Unknown Good I Encountered Today:

What God Revealed to Me Today:

What I Still Want to Know
About God: _____



Day Twelve

I Will Name Today: God's _____

Today I Was Heading In a Wrong Direction
Until: _____

What I've Been Thinking About My Life's
Path: _____

Today's Gentle Nudges
From God: _____



Day Thirteen

If Today Had Been a Dictionary, Its Title Would Be: _____

What I Learned Today About My Life's Meaning: _____



How God Added New Meaning to an Ordinary Part of My Life Today:

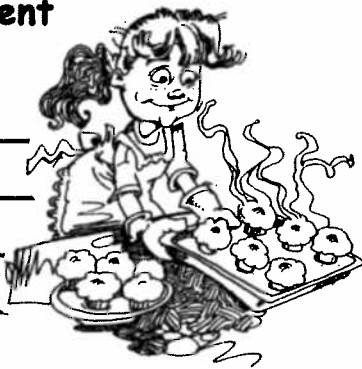
How God Made Simple a Complicated Part of My Life Today: _____

Day Fourteen

If This Day Was a Friend, I Would Call It:

A Quiet Pleasure I Enjoyed Today: _____

How My Life Gave Enjoyment
To Someone Else Today:



How God Was Pleased Today: _____

Where I Found Satisfaction Today: _____

Partnered Commitments

You have made a commitment to one (or more) other individuals about your mutual hopes and plans for a lifestyle that is more vital, energized and fruitful. Use the space here to record your promises to/with these individuals.

My AppleTree Partner(s): _____

What I Have Promised to Do: _____

The Times We Will Check With Each Other:

Things We Can Talk About:

A Check-In Time Is Like:

- A Rewind and Fast Forward Combined
 - Taking Off Your Makeup at the End of a Day
 - Unwrapping a Gift You Already Have
 - Taking Time to be Seriously Silly
 - A Prayer With Food and Friends Added
 - Talking With Your Coach, Only There's No Score Card and You Already Know You've Done Just Great!
 - Eating Energy Food That Tastes Good
 - Finding Money on the Ground
 - Watching God Smile
 - One of Those Times in Church Where You're Glad to Be There With All These Wonderful People, and You Wonder How God Could Have Done So Well With Their Lives, and You're So Thankful That You Find It Hard to Sing, and the Tears Are Hot and Happy.
 - Other:
-

And Finally . . . ?

With the devotional thoughts and materials here, AppleTree is finished. But God is hardly finished with this group - with you! "Finally" is never quite final with God. And so you can leave this time together with other believers calmly curious about what God has in store for your life. You can end your prayers with exclamation marks AND with question marks because you know that God will continue to be with you, whether pruning, watering or fertilizing your life with blessing and insight. Finally, then, AppleTree is about God. Just like your life is finally about God.

A Reading About One of Jesus' Disciples (John 21:19b-22)

After this [Jesus] said to [Peter], "Follow me." Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!"

Psalm Verses About Happy Folks

(Psalm 1, verses 1-3)

Happy are those

who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
or take the path that sinners tread,
or sit in the seat of scoffers;

but their delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law they meditate day and night.

They are like trees planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in its season,
and their leaves do not wither.

In all that they do, they prosper.

Psalm Verses About Fruitful Trees

(Psalm 52, verse 8)

But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God.

I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever.

(Psalm 92, verses 12-15)

The righteous flourish like the palm tree,
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

They are planted in the house of the Lord;
they flourish in the courts of our God.

In old age they still produce fruit;

they are always green and full of sap,
showing that the Lord is upright;

he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

Notes to Myself



Notes to Others



What If





Seasoning Faith & Generosity

