

# Sabbath Day

02/06

“Sabbath observance remains to this day one of the great tests which divides the righteous from the worldly and wicked.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *MD*, pg. 658)

## Sabbath Defined

(BD 764-765;Genesis 2:2-3;Exodus 20:10-11;Deuteronomy 5:15;D&C 59 13, heading)

**01** – “Sabbath worship, that system which singles out one day in seven to be used exclusively for spiritual things, is a sign which identifies the Lord’s people. Whatever the world may do, day in and day out, without cessation, in the way of toil and revelry, the saints of God rest from their labors and pay their devotions to the Most High on his holy Sabbath. **True religion always has and always will call for a Sabbath on which men rest from their temporal labors and work exclusively on spiritual matters. True religion requires—it is not optional; it is mandatory**—that one day in seven be devoted exclusively to worshipping the Father in Spirit and in truth. **Without a Sabbath of rest and worship, men’s hearts will never be centered on the things of the Spirit sufficiently to assure them of salvation.**

“The law of the Sabbath is so basic, so fundamental, that the Lord Jehovah named it as number four in the Ten Commandments themselves. The first three commandments call upon men to worship the Lord and reverence his great and holy name. The fourth gives us the Sabbath day as the weekly occasion on which we perfect our worship and put ourselves in tune to the full with Him by whom all things are. **It is in no sense an exaggeration nor does it overstate the fact one whit to say that any person who keeps the Sabbath, according to the revealed pattern, will be saved in the celestial kingdom.** The Sabbath is a day of worship; the requirement to rest from our labors, to do no servile work therein, is simply an incident to the real purpose of the day. Vital as it is to refrain from the toil and to turn away from temporalities, these requirements are for the purpose of putting men in a position to do what should be done on the Sabbath, that is, to worship the Father in the name of the Son, to worship him in Spirit and in truth. True worship includes keeping the commandments, and those who devote their Sabbaths to true and proper worship obtain the encouragement that leads to full obedience.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Promised Messiah*, pg. 390-391)

**02** – “**From the time of Genesis to our own day, there has been no subject spoken of more directly and or repeated than the Sabbath. It is one of the laws most dear to the heart of God. Yet it is noted far more in its desecration than in its acceptance and proper observance.**” (Mark E. Petersen, *Ensign*, May 1975, pg. 47)

**03** – “**Keeping holy the Sabbath day is a law of God, resounding through the ages from Mt. Sinai. You cannot transgress the law of God without circumscribing your spirit....[O]ur Sabbath, the first day of the week, commemorates the greatest event in all history: Christ's resurrection and his visit as a resurrected being to his assembled Apostles. His birth, of course, was necessary, and just as great, so I say this is one of the greatest events in all history.**” (David O. McKay, *CR*, October 1956, pg. 90)

**04** – “**The Church accepts Sunday as the Christian Sabbath and proclaims the sanctity of the day. We admit without argument that under the Mosaic law the seventh day of the week, Saturday, was designated and observed as the holy day, and that the change from Saturday to Sunday was a feature of the apostolic administration following the personal ministry of Jesus Christ. Greater than the question of this day or that in the week is the actuality of the weekly Sabbath, to be observed as a day of special and particular devotion to the service of the Lord.**” (James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, pg. 407)

**05** – “The Church of Jesus Christ teaches that Sunday is the acceptable day for Sabbath observance, on the authority of direct revelation specifying the Lord's Day as such. In this, a new dispensation, and verily the last—the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times—the law of the Sabbath has been reaffirmed unto the Church. **It is to be noted that the revelation, part of which follows, was given to the Church on a Sunday—August 7, 1831 (D&C 59:13).**” (James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, pg. 409)

## **Significance of the Sabbath**

(D&C 20:75; D&C 59:9-13)

**Worship** [Hebrew] *'la-avodh'* = to work, to serve

**06** – “**I desire to say this morning that I feel impressed to emphasize what the Lord has designated as the most important meeting in the Church, and that is the sacrament meeting.**” (David O. McKay, *CR*, October 1929, pg. 11)

**07** – “We constantly talk about the worldliness of the present day and speak of the fact that our young people face more serious temptations **than** did those of a generation ago, and this is probably true. Also, more parents seem to be caught up in the worldliness of today than was the case a generation ago.

**What can we do to protect ourselves under these hazardous circumstances? How can we better help our young people to remain unspotted from the world?**

The Lord gives us the answer, and says that it can be done by sincerely observing the Sabbath day. Most people have never thought of it in this way, but note the words of the Lord in this regard: “That thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world”—note these words—“that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day.” (D&C 59:9)

Think about that for a moment. Do we really believe in God—sincerely? Are we convinced that he knows what he is talking about? If we are, then will we take him and his word seriously? Or will we further trifle with divine revelation?

**The Lord does know what he is talking about. Sabbath observance will help us to more fully remain unspotted from the world.**

**If we are serious about avoiding the contamination of worldliness, shall we not take his word at face value and believe it and practice it?”** (Mark E. Petersen, *Ensign*, May 1975, pg. 47–48)

**08** – “**A man of my acquaintance remained home each Sabbath and justified himself by saying that he could benefit more by reading a good book at home than by attending the sacrament meeting and listening to a poor sermon. But the home, sacred as it should be, is not the house of prayer. In it no sacrament is administered; in it is not found the fellowship with members, nor the confession of sins to the brethren. The mountains may be termed the temples of God and the forests and streams his handiwork, but only in the meetinghouse, or house of prayer, can be fulfilled all the requirements of the Lord.**” (Spencer W. Kimball, *TSWK*, pg. 220)

**09** – “**We are under the necessity of assembling here from Sabbath to Sabbath, and in Ward meeting, and besides, have to call our solemn assemblies, to teach, talk, pray, sing, and exhort. What for? To keep us in remembrance of our God and our holy religion. Is this custom necessary? Yes; because we are liable to forget—so prone to wander, that we need to have the Gospel sounded in our ears as much as once, twice, or thrice a week, or, behold, we will turn again to our idols.**” (Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, pg. 165)

**10** – “**Unless the saints attend their meetings it will be hard for them to keep alive in the Gospel.**” (Anthon H. Lund, *CR*, October 1907, pg. 9)

**11** – “For Latter-day Saints, to offer up ‘**sacraments**’ in the house of prayer as the Lord commands means for you to present your devotions before the Lord in the form of songs of praise, prayers and thanksgiving, testimonies, and the partaking of the **sacrament** and the study of the word of God. In its most widely accepted usage it means for you to stand for any sacred right or ceremony whereby you affirm your allegiance to your Heavenly Father and His Son.” (Harold B. Lee, *Ye Are the Light of the World*, p. 72)

**12** – “**But we do not go to Sabbath meetings to be entertained or even simply to be instructed. We go to**

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worship the Lord. It is an individual responsibility, and regardless of what is said from the pulpit, if one wishes to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth, he may do so by attending his meetings, partaking of the sacrament, and contemplating the beauties of the gospel. If the service is a failure to you, you have failed. No one can worship for you; you must do your own waiting upon the Lord.” (Spencer W. Kimball, *TSWK*, pg. 271)

13 – “One is to respect the Sabbath day. While the Savior himself cautioned against extreme forms of Sabbath day observance, it is well to remember whose day the Sabbath is. There seems to be an ever-increasing popularity in disregarding the centuries-old commandment to observe and respect the Sabbath day. **For many it has become a holiday rather than a holy day of rest and sanctification.** For some it is a day to shop and buy groceries. The decision of those who engage in shopping, sports, work, and recreation on the Sabbath day is their own, for The Lord’s commandment about the Sabbath day has not been altered, nor has the Church’s affirmation of the commandment to observe the Sabbath day. **Those who violate this commandment in the exercise of their agency are answerable for losing the blessings which observance of this commandment would bring.**” (James E. Faust, *Ensign*, November 1986, pg. 9)

*Application:* Is Yours a Holy Day or a Hol*l*i day? Does God come before I - - I does make a difference!  
Is Yours an Oblation or an Obligation?  
Ice cream Sunday with disgusting toppings - - Some things just don’t go with Sundays!

### **Sabbath is a Sign**

(Exodus 31:13, 16-17; Ezekiel 20)

14 – “We can readily see that observance of the Sabbath is an indication of the depth of our conversion.

Our observance or nonobservance of the Sabbath is an unerring measure of our attitude toward the Lord, personally and toward his suffering in Gethsemane, his death on the cross, and his resurrection of the dead. It is a sign of whether we are Christians in very deed, or whether our conversion is so shallow that commemoration of his atoning sacrifice means little or nothing to us.” (Mark E. Petersen, *Ensign*, May 1975, pg. 49)

15 – “This very day upon which we meet here to worship, viz, the Sabbath, has become the playday of this great nation—the day set apart by thousands to violate the commandment that God gave long, long ago, and I am persuaded that much of the sorrow and distress that is afflicting and will continue to afflict mankind is traceable to the fact that they have ignored his admonition to keep the Sabbath day holy.” (George Albert Smith, *CR*, October 1935, pg. 120)

16 – “As we **move** forward into a wonderful future, there are what some may regard as the lesser commandments but which are also of such tremendous importance.

I mention the Sabbath day. The Sabbath of the Lord is becoming the play day of the people. It is a day of golf and football on television, of buying and selling in our stores and markets. Are we moving to mainstream America as some observers believe? In this I fear we are. What a telling thing it is to see the parking lots of the markets filled on Sunday in communities that are predominately LDS.

Our strength for the future, our resolution to grow the Church across the world, will be weakened if we violate the will of the Lord in this important matter. He has so very clearly spoken anciently and again in modern revelation. We cannot disregard with impunity that which He has said.” (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, November 1997, pg. 69)

17 – “It is a test to ‘see if we will do all things’ commanded...

In the early days of Israel specific injunctions were given, and the death penalty was imposed for violation....

It would appear that the reason the Sabbath day is so hard to live for so many people is that it is still written on tablets of stone rather than being written in their hearts....

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It is unthinkable that one who loves the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and who with a broken heart and contrite spirit recognizes the limitless gifts which the Lord had given him would fail to spend one day in seven in gratitude and thankfulness, and carrying forward the good works of the Lord. **The observance of the Sabbath is an indication of the measure of our love for our Heavenly Father.**” (Spencer W. Kimball, *TSWK*, pg. 217-218)

**18** – “A decay in the **national** religious life always follows carelessness in the matters of Sabbath observance?” (BD 765)

**19** – There is a direct **correlation** between the Sabbath day and the Weather? (Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, May 1977, pg. 4)

### **Subjects Concerning the Sabbath**

(James 1:27; Isaiah 58:13-14)

#### *Activities -*

**20** – “An acquaintance of mine had purchased a lovely boat and had just finished varnishing it and painting it. When I stopped by, he was admiring it. I surmised that he was getting it ready to take it, with his family, to the reservoir the next **Sunday**. He said, 'It is complete and in readiness except for one thing.' Then he asked me, 'Could you suggest an appropriate name for the boat?' I knew him very well. I thought for a moment, and then I said, '**Well, perhaps you should name it The Sabbath-Breaker.**' He looked at me, and he understood.” (ElRay L. Christiansen, *CR*, April 1962, pg. 33)

#### **Do's**

**21** – “The Sabbath is a day on which to take inventory—to analyze our weaknesses, to confess our sins to our associates and our Lord. It is a day on which to fast in 'sackcloth and ashes.' It is a day on which to read good books, a day to contemplate and ponder, a day to study lessons for priesthood and auxiliary organizations, a day to study the scriptures and to prepare sermons, a day to nap and rest and relax, a day to visit the sick, a day to preach the gospel, a day to proselyte, a day to visit quietly with the family and get acquainted with our children, a day for proper courting, a day to do good, a day to drink at the fountain of knowledge and of instruction, a day to seek forgiveness of our sins, a day for the enrichment of our spirit and our soul, a day to restore us to our spiritual stature, a day to partake of the emblems of his sacrifice and atonement, a day to contemplate the glories of the gospel and of the eternal realms, a day to climb high on the upward path toward our Heavenly Father.” (Spencer W. Kimball, *TSWK*, pg. 216)

**22** – “The Sabbath is not a day for indolent lounging about the house or puttering around in the garden, but it is a day for consistent **attendance** at meetings for the worship of the Lord, drinking at the fountain of knowledge and instruction, enjoying the family, and finding uplift in music and song.

It is a day for reading the scriptures, visiting the sick, visiting relatives and friends, doing home teaching, working on genealogy records, taking a nap, writing letters to missionaries and servicemen or relatives, preparation for the following week's church lessons, games with the small children, fasting for a purpose, writing devotional poetry, and other worthwhile activities of great variety (Spencer W. Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, pg. 270-271)

**23** – “May we not hope that in addition to our worshipful activities on the Lord's Day we might also on that day reduce the drudgery of the **home** to a minimum, and that outside the home only essential chores will be performed. Make this a day of prayerful, thoughtful study of the scriptures and other good books. While filled with the joy of the Sabbath, write a letter to your sweetheart or an absent loved one or a friend who may need your spiritual strength. Make your homes the places for the singing and playing of beautiful music in harmony with the spirit of the day. At evening's close as you gather at your fireside with the family alone or with friends, discuss the precious truths of the gospel and close with the benediction of family prayer. My experience has

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taught me that the prompting of the conscience to a faithful Church member is the safest indicator as to that which is contrary to the spirit of worship on the Sabbath Day.” (Harold B. Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living*, pg. 148)

### **Don'ts**

**24** – “Let us consider three things which today particularly are leading the people away. First, failure to keep the Sabbath day holy...

The Sabbath day seems to have become a day of recreation. Professional sports keep thousands of people at home with their television sets or traveling to places where the games are played. Thousands participate as players or spectators, and in their affluence people own boats, motorcycles, campers, fishing gear, and other sports equipment, and tend to feel it is a waste not to use them to their full advantage on weekends, including Sunday.” (N. Eldon Tanner, *Ensign*, November 1976, pg. 75)

**25** – “We have **become** a world of Sabbath breakers. On the Sabbath the lakes are full of boats, the beaches are crowded, the shows have their best attendance, the golf links are dotted with players. The Sabbath is the preferred day for rodeos, conventions, family picnics; and ball games are played on the sacred day....

'Business as usual' is the slogan for many, and our holy day has become a holiday.

Sabbath-breakers too are those who buy commodities or entertainment on the Sabbath, thus encouraging pleasure palaces and business establishments to remain open—which they otherwise would not do. If we buy, sell, trade, or support such on the Lord's day we are rebellious as the children of Israel, the dire consequences of whose transgressions against this and other commandments should be a permanent warning to us all.” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, pg. 46)

**26** – “**People frequently wonder where to draw the line: what is worthy and what is unworthy to do upon the Sabbath.** But if one loves the Lord with all his heart, might, mind, and strength; if one can put away selfishness and curb desire; if one can measure each Sabbath activity by the yardstick of worshipfulness; if one is honest with his Lord and with himself; if one offers a ‘broken heart and a contrite spirit,’ it is quite unlikely that there will be Sabbath breaking in that person's life.” (Spencer W. Kimball, *TSWK*, pg. 219)

**27** – “Let us not **be** like the Church member who partakes of the sacrament in the morning, then defiles the Sabbath that afternoon by cleaning the house or by watching television or by choosing an afternoon of sleep over an afternoon of service.” (Spencer W. Kimball, *TSWK*, pg. 225)

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## **Ezra Taft Benson—Do's and Don'ts for the Sabbath**

*Ensign*, May 1971, pg. 4-7

### **SABBATH DO'S**

May I suggest some activities and ideas that fit the purpose of the Sabbath.:

- Engage in activities that contribute to greater spirituality.
- Attend essential Church meetings in the house of prayer.
- Acquire spiritual knowledge by reading the scriptures, Church history and biographies, and the inspired words of our Church leaders.
- Rest physically, get acquainted with your family, relate scriptural stories to your children, and bear your testimony to build family unity.
- Visit the sick and aged shut-ins.
- Sing the songs of Zion and listen to inspiring music.
- Pay devotions to the Most High through prayer (personal and family), fasting, administration, and father's

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blessings.

- Prepare food with a singleness of heart: simple meals prepared largely on Saturday.
- Remember that Sunday is the Lord's day, a day to do his work.

In a statement from the First Presidency, we read that ‘the Sabbath is not just another day on which we merely rest from work, free to spend it as our light-mindedness may suggest. It is a holy day, the Lord's Day, to be spent as a day of worship and reverence. All matters extraneous thereto should be shunned.

Latter-day Saints, with a testimony of the Gospel and a knowledge of the spiritual blessings that come from keeping the Sabbath, will never permit themselves to make it a shopping day, an activity that has no place in a proper observance of the Holy Day of the Lord, on which we are commanded to pour out our souls in gratitude for the many blessings of health, strength, physical comfort, and spiritual joy which come from the Lord's bounteous hand.’ (*Church News*, July II, 1959, pg.3)

### **SABBATH DON'TS**

Now, what about those activities that do not fit the spirit or purpose of the Sabbath? It seems to me that the following should be avoided on the Sabbath:

- Overworking and staying up late Saturday so that you are exhausted the next day.
- Filling the Sabbath so full of extra meetings that there is no time for prayer, meditation, family fellowship, and counseling.
- Doing gardening and odd jobs around the house.
- Taking trips to canyons or resorts, visiting friends socially, joy riding, wasting time, and engaging in other amusements. (Brigham Young, Discoursed of Brigham Young, p.165)
- Playing vigorously and going to movies.
- Engaging in sports and hunting ‘wild animals’ which God made for the use of man only ‘in times of famine and excess of hunger.’ (D&C 89:15) ‘Let the boys have their exercise. Let them have amusement at the proper time, but let them be taught better things on the Sabbath day,’ said President Joseph F. Smith. (‘What Shall We Do on the Sabbath Day?’, Improvement Era, 19:864)
- Reading material that does not contribute to your spiritual uplift.
- Shopping or supporting with your patronage businesses that operate on Sunday, such as grocery stores, supermarkets, restaurants, and service stations.

### **SABBATH HELPS**

Here are a few helps toward a sacred Sabbath:

- Houseclean, straighten up, refuel the car, and prepare clothing and meals in advance on Saturday.
- Provide for recreation and amusements during the week and provide for a holiday during the week, if possible.
- Get a good rest on Saturday night.
- Students should study their school subject during the week and keep the Sabbath sacred.

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**Buying** - (First Presidency Directive - September 28, 1992; Nehemiah 10:31; Nehemiah 13:15-18)

**28** – “An owner who keeps his business open on Sunday prevents his employees from attending worship services and being with their families on the Sabbath. Modern-day prophets have encouraged us not to shop on Sunday. Those of us who shop on the Sabbath cannot escape responsibility for encouraging businesses to remain open on that day. Essential services must be provided, but most Sabbath transactions could be avoided if merchants and customers were determined to avoid doing business on the Lord's day.” (Dallin H. Oaks, Ensign, November 1986, pg. 21)

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29 – “We call attention also to the habit in which many buy their commodities on the Sabbath. Many employed people would be released for rest and worship on the Sabbath if we did not shop on that day. Numerous excuses and rationalizations are presented to justify the Sunday buying. We call upon all of you to keep the Sabbath holy and make no Sunday purchases.” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, November 1974, pg. 6)

### **Dress -**

30 – L. Tom Perry suggests that we should dress to fit the occasion. Boys in something somewhat better than levis and T-shirts; girls in comfortable decent dresses not in shorts or slacks. (*CR*, October 1980, pg. 9)

### **Homework -**

31 – “Over a lifetime of observation, it is clear to me that the farmer who observes the Sabbath day seems to get more done on his farm than he would if he worked seven days. The mechanic will be able to turn out more and better products in six days than in seven. The doctor, the lawyer, the dentist, the scientist will accomplish more by trying to rest on the Sabbath than if he tries to utilize every day of the week for his professional work. **I would counsel all students, if they can, to arrange their schedules so that they do not study on the Sabbath. If students and other seekers after truth will do this, their minds will be quickened and the infinite Spirit will lead them to the verities they wish to learn.** This is because God has hallowed his day and blessed it as a perpetual covenant of faithfulness.” (James E. Faust, *Ensign*, November 1991, pg. 34)

### **Labor -**

32 – “It is true that some people must work on the Sabbath. And, in fact, some of the work that is truly necessary—caring for the sick, for example—may actually serve to hallow the Sabbath. However, in such activities our motives are a most important consideration.

When men and women are willing to work on the Sabbath to increase their wealth, they are breaking the commandments; for money taken in on the Sabbath, if the work is unnecessary, is unclean money. Can you imagine a person laboring on the Sabbath in defiance of the Lord’s command, and then bringing a tithe or other portion of the ill-gained fruits of this labor to Him as an offering? Just as in Old Testament times, offerings presented to the Lord must be “without blemish,” and unnecessary Sabbath-day earnings can never be such.” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, January 1978, pg. 5)

33 – “I was in another stake, also in a reorganization program, and another brother was considered for one of the highest positions; and when we asked him of his occupation, he said he was a grocer by trade. ‘Well, most of the stores keep open on the Sabbath. Do you?’ ‘We lock our store on Sunday,’ he said. ‘But how can you compete with these people who are open seven days a week?’ ‘We compete. At least we get along very well,’ was his reply. ‘But would not the Sabbath be your biggest day?’ ‘Yes,’ he answered, ‘we would probably sell twice as much on the Sabbath as we would on an average day, but we get along without it, and the Lord has been kind; he has been gracious; he has been good.’ ‘What do you sell in this store?’ I asked him. He said, ‘Groceries and miscellaneous merchandise.’ ‘Your competitors sell other things including forbidden things, do they not?’ I asked. ‘Yes, but we have felt it was not right,’ he said. ‘We lose trade, of course. People leave our store and go to the other store and buy many dollars’ worth of groceries where they can get a few cans of beer or some wine, but we do not sell it.’ And I could not refrain from saying, ‘God bless you, my faithful brother. The Lord will not be unmindful of these seeming sacrifices. Your dollars are clean. They will surely not hinder you in finding your way into the kingdom of God.’” (Spencer W. Kimball, *TSWK*, pg. 228)

### **Meals - (D&C 59:13)**

34 – “It is a day not for lavish banqueting, **but a day of simple meals and spiritual feasting...**” (Spencer W. Kimball, *TSWK*, pg. 215)

35 – “President Spencer W. Kimball put our teaching on Sabbath observance in a nutshell when he suggested that we ‘measure each Sabbath activity by the yardstick of worshipfulness.’ (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball,

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pg. 219)” (Dallin H. Oaks, *Pure in Heart*, pg. 28)

### **Meetings - (First Presidency Directive - February 11, 1999)**

**36** – “The Lord knows the wants of his mortal children, and has appointed unto them one-seventh part of the time for rest, though we cannot say, in every sense of the word, that this is a day of rest to the Latter-day Saints or to the professing Christians, some of whom are in the habit of rising at sunrise to hold prayer-meetings; they then eat breakfast and hurry away to the morning service until noon; in the afternoon they again have **meetings**, and class **meetings**, prayer **meetings**, confessing **meetings**, etc., and so continue until nine in the evening. **To such persons I cannot consider it really a day of rest.**” (Brigham Young, *JD*, 10:187)

**37** – “I remember last conference I attended in the Assembly Hall; I was at the priesthood meeting. At the close of our great and beloved prophet’s wonderful discourse and counsel to us, at least 200 or 300 men got up and just started moving en masse toward all the doors. The closing hymn hadn’t been sung, the prayer hadn’t been rendered. And these men, inconsiderate, lacking in discipline, simply got up and moved out of the Assembly Hall to save five minutes.

“I wonder, brethren, and I love you, but I just wonder how you can do it. I don’t see any of the men that I prize most, leaving any meetings early except in an emergency. I believe they have the dignity to not offend God. I believe it is an offense to God when we leave meetings early, and when we come late to meetings.” (Vaughn J. Featherstone, *Ensign*, May 1975, pg. 67–68)

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## **First Presidency Directive - February 11, 1999**

To: Members of the Church Throughout the World

*(To Be Read in Sacrament Meeting and Delivered by Home Teachers)*

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

All about us we see evidence of the corrosive elements targeted to injure our youth.

We compliment most warmly those of our young people who choose to follow the way of the Lord and the program of the Church. We are pleased to note that faith is increasing among our youth, for which we are deeply grateful.

Unfortunately, there are some who fall into the adversary’s net and drift into inactivity and trouble. We are deeply concerned with these.

We call upon parents to devote their best efforts to the teaching and rearing of their children in gospel principles which will keep them close to the Church. The home is the basis of a righteous life, and no other instrumentality can take its place or fulfill its essential functions in carrying forward this God-given responsibility.

We counsel parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities. However worthy and appropriate other demands or activities may be, they must not be permitted to displace the divinely-appointed duties that only parents and families can adequately perform.

We urge bishops and other Church officers to do all they can to assist parents in seeing that they have time and help, where needed, as they nurture their families and bring them up in the way of the Lord.

Wherever possible, Sunday meetings, other than those under the three-hour schedule and perhaps council meetings on early Sunday mornings or firesides later in the evening, should be

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avoided so that parents may be with their children. As we strengthen families, we will strengthen the entire Church.

Faithfully your brethren,  
Gordon B. Hinckley  
Thomas S. Monson  
James E. Faust

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### **Stories Concerning the Sabbath**

**37** – “A more recent miracle occurred at the Wells Stake Welfare Tannery some years ago where hides of animals were tanned into leather. On regular work days, the hides were removed from the vats and fresh lime placed in the vats, after which the hides were returned to the lime solution. If the hides were not turned on holidays, they would spoil. But the change was never made on Sunday, and there were no spoiled hides on Monday. Explained J. Lowell Fox, the supervisor of the tannery at the time:

‘This brought a strange fact to our minds: holidays are determined by man, and on these days just as on every week day, the hides need to have special care every twelve hours. Sunday is the day set aside by the Lord as a day of rest, and He makes it possible for us to rest from our labors as He has commanded. The hides at the tannery never spoil on Sundays. This is a modern-day miracle, a miracle that happens every weekend!’ (Handbook for Guide Patrol Leaders (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1964), pg. 37).” (James E. Faust *Ensign*, October 1991, pg. 35)

**38** – “There never was a time in my life when I questioned my father’s faith. His convictions were stamped indelibly upon his life, firm enough to withstand whatever trial, adversity, or challenge presented itself.

When I was a boy we lived on a small Utah farm where money was scarce and work abundant. During those early growing-up years the summers seemed especially difficult to me and filled with endless drudgery. There were beets to thin, corn to hoe, and ditches to clean; the troublesome weeds always grew back; there was always another crop of hay to haul.

The one saving balm, the one pleasant oasis in the midst of all the summer labor was the Sabbath. We all knew that Sunday was the Lord’s day. The weeds, the hay lying in the field, and the unharvested grain would all wait until Monday.

Stopping work on the Sabbath was not always as easy as hanging up a hoe and not returning to the cornfield. There were complications. The summers were the only real opportunities to harvest financial security. If a farmer did not prosper during those short summer months, the long winters were lean and difficult. The crops had to succeed, and more often than not the key to this modest prosperity was water—water that was scarce in Utah, water that seldom came in the form of rain, water that had to be stored meticulously during the winter and spring and rationed carefully throughout the hot, dry summer weeks.

Each farm was dependent upon the irrigation ditch. The ditch, with its life-giving water, was all that stood between the farmer and disaster. Irrigation was imperative, and at times that posed a real Sabbath dilemma. Some years a farmer’s turn fell on Monday, some years on Tuesday, some years on another day of the week. And sometimes the turn fell on Sunday. The farmer had no choice.

Like everyone else, Father’s turn came on Sunday some years. I remember those years well because I was always impressed by my father’s determination to keep the Sabbath day holy. I don’t suppose the Lord would have condemned him for irrigating his farm on Sunday. He knew father’s heart, and He knew the circumstances under which he and the other farmers labored. However, father wanted to avoid even that Sabbath labor. He was convinced that were the Lord to make out those watering schedules for the farmers, no turn would ever fall on His Sabbath. I never heard Father verbalize his resolve not to trespass on the Lord’s holy day but his life reflected it.

## *Sabbath*

When father's turn fell on Sunday, he did all he could to avoid Sabbath irrigation. Friday and Saturday he would watch at the irrigation ditch for any run-off water from the farmers up the line. He squeezed every available drop from the ditch, and by Sunday the farm was irrigated. I don't remember that he ever had been forced to work on the Lord's day. This meant more work for him, but father was willing to make the sacrifice if it would allow him to rest on the Sabbath.

Everything always seemed to work out. As I observed him through the years, his dedication and resolve were a testimony to me that the Lord blesses those who strive to keep his commandments.

Then one year came a special trial of his faith. The scorching summer heat seemed to come early that year, portending a drought. The days passed slowly, the sun baking everything—the lawn, the garden, and the fields wilting under the burning rays. Of all the years to have a Sunday water turn! The farm needed water, water that had not come down the irrigation ditch as runoff on Friday and Saturday; consequently, the farm was dry on Sunday.

One Sunday morning, my mother approached my father with great concern. 'Joseph,' she said, 'I think you'd better turn the water down from the ditch, at least on the lawn and garden. They're burning up.'

And they were. Everything was burning up without water. There was no alternative. The farm had to have water, and if father let his irrigation turn slip by, there would be no water until the following Sunday. The farm would never go another week.

And so, before getting dressed for his Sunday meetings, father left the house, carrying his shovel over his shoulder. It must have been terribly disappointing for him to trudge up the hill that morning. All these years he had worked to avoid this very labor, and now he was caught. We were sure the Lord would not condemn him, and yet, Father wanted very much to find another way.

He reached the irrigation ditch and put the canvas dam in place, but before doing anything else, still bending over the ditch, he paused and contemplated. What was he to do? He pondered the Lord's injunction to keep the Sabbath holy. Did he really believe that, not merely with his lips but with his life?

While he was deep in thought, he received a poignantly powerful communication, one he would never forget: 'Pull out your dam. Put up your shovel and tools. I will take care of things for you. It may not be early in the day, but I will take care of it. As for the summer, leave it to me. I will provide.'

Father straightened up. There was no one around. He looked heavenward. The sky was clear and blue, no clouds in sight. A dry breeze was blowing, promising a stifling, suffocating day.

With the broiling sun intense and the earth parched and powdery dry, father pulled out the canvas dam, left the ditch, and returned to the house. He had been told. He knew that. He didn't know how he would be taken care of, but he knew he had been promised. He dressed and went to his Sunday meetings, leaving his farm to the power he had trusted all his life.

When they returned home from their meetings, the sky was still clear, the air hot, the farm wilting beneath the sweltering sun. With no visible sign of relief, mother, still greatly concerned about the garden, again spoke to father, who had not mentioned to her the experience he had had that morning. 'It surely doesn't look much like rain,' she said. 'What are you going to do about the garden?'

For the second time that day father climbed the hill to the irrigation ditch, saddened by his situation. Reluctantly he placed the dam into the ditch, but then he paused, amazed by his own faltering conviction. 'Where is your faith?' he asked himself pointedly.

Filled with a new resolve, he pulled the dam from the ditch and went down the mountain, determined never again to make that Sabbath trek to the canal.

Coming down the hill, he lifted his eyes to the sky and saw clouds beginning to gather. Within an hour the rain was coming down in torrents. The dry earth soaked up the needed moisture, and the lawn, the garden, and the fields were refreshed.

That rain was a miracle, but it was only a beginning. Summer was just commencing. The sweltering months of July and August lay ahead. But father had no worries; he had been promised by Him who had given the law and who would provide the way for its compliance.

## *Sabbath*

The following week a neighbor asked father if he would trade a portion of his Sunday water turn for a portion of a Saturday one. Father was delighted. During that short time on Saturday he was able to water the lawn and garden. Still, there was no possible way to irrigate the farm's acres of corn, barley, and hay during those few short hours on Saturday. But the Lord blessed him in another way. Periodically throughout the summer, just when rain was needed most, clouds gathered, the rains came, and the crops were watered.

So sure was my father that the Lord would watch over him that not once during the summer did he clean a ditch or furrow out the corn. This was hot, dry Utah, where the farmer's whole existence was dependent upon those irrigation ditches, but this summer the ditches on father's farm were never used. Never before had father gone an entire summer without irrigating his farm, but this summer was different. This summer was the Lord's summer, and he was providing.

By the end of the summer father had harvested three bumper crops of hay, a bounteous yield of barley, and a lush crop of silage corn. The windows of heaven had truly opened, and the Lord had indeed provided.

It has been some time since that miraculous summer, but my own faith has been strengthened ever since. So often the Lord wants to bless us, but we refuse to let him. We fear to trust him who has given us everything, and yet he is so anxious to send us, as it were, the water of life. His blessings await us, but we must trust him completely, unconditionally. It seems that at times we must watch our dreams wither and wilt, with no visible sign of relief on the horizon. But then, after the trial of our faith, comes the miracle." (Alma J. Yates, *Ensign*, August 1982, pg. 57–58)

**39** – “If I go over what happened a hundred times, I still can't make any sense out of it.

Look, it was this normal weekend night in the city, and Mother was planning my Sabbath. The Sabbath, she reminded me, was the next day.

‘Now tomorrow afternoon after church,’ she was saying, ‘Brother Matthew wants you to be available for home teaching. Fortunately for you, all your home teaching families are within walking distance from our house. Your father has no end of trouble getting across the city to see his families all in one afternoon.’

I would not have to ask whether our families would let us in the door. Years ago, some of the families would have slammed their door in our faces, and left me with the afternoon free. But since the city church leaders' activation efforts, everyone is super nice now. They are all more than happy to see me and talk the day away!

But I had no intention of going home teaching the next day. Or even going to church, for that matter.

‘Oh, Mother, ...’ I began, knowing full well how this conversation would end. Pleading to get one Sabbath free never seemed to work with my parents. ‘Oh, Mother, ...’ I began again, ‘you know I have 100 percent attendance at all my meetings, but just this once, just this one Church Day, I want to do something on my own, in place of church ...’

‘In place of church?’ Her eyes widened. I knew that I was pushing a lost cause, but I kept right on babbling. I have a bad habit of that.

‘Yes, in place of church! You know how you are always telling us to get out and enjoy God's world, so I want to go out with my friend Sam on the lake tomorrow. He just built a new boat, and the lake is just a little way from the city ...’

I was going to end my request with something about ‘communing with God's world right out in nature,’ but one look at my mother told me that, even with the theological ending, my argument was not going to get a fair hearing.

‘Going boating! On the Sabbath day! Now, what was it we were just discussing in our last family home evening?’

I groaned. The last family home evening had been on keeping the Sabbath day holy. They had asked me to prepare the lesson, and evidently I had been especially convincing.

I tried a different tack. ‘Now, Mother, you don't believe Heavenly Father is going to send me straight to hell just because I miss one church meeting, do you?’

## *Sabbath*

Her face softened just a bit. But only just a bit. 'I believe Heavenly Father wants to give you as many blessings as he possible can. But if you don't keep the commandments, you may miss some important blessings that he wants you to have.'

Like being bored, I thought. Well, there's more than one way to skin a cat. I knew through painful experience that outright defiance would get me nowhere. The last time I tried that I wound up with my mother crying all night while I had to listen to my father give me a lecture on a son's responsibility to listen to his parents. No, this controversy had to be handled with stealth and guile.

The next morning I got up bright and early and dressed in my best. Both Mother and Father were pleased; they usually had to drag me out of bed. I put on my most innocent expression and told them that I was going to attend church on the other side of the city, so I might be back a little late. They gave me a big smile and kissed me good-bye. I almost felt guilty.

The rest, of course, was pretty simple. As soon as I got clear of the city and down by the lake, I stashed my good clothes in the bushes, having worn my fishing cutoffs underneath. I had a great day with Sam on the lake, communing with nature.

At sundown I started back to the city. I didn't think I would have any trouble convincing my parents I had been engaged in healthy church activities the entire day. They were so full of goodness that they seldom even suspected anything less in others.

But when I got to the main highway that's supposed to lead right into the city I didn't see any city lights. That's odd, I said to myself. But I just kept running down the road. The road came to an end, and still, no city.

I mean, there was just an empty field. Now, how could the whole city of Enoch just disappear?" (Rolf Devries, *New Era*, [I Miss the City](#), July 1990, pg. 49-50)