

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 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.

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 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