

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS & CHURCH HISTORY GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

* GREEN MOUNTAIN 1ST WARD * LAKEWOOD, COLORADO * 05/03/09 * PAGE 1 *

Lesson 16: “Thou Shalt ... Offer Up Thy Sacraments upon My Holy Day” (D&C 59; Bible Dictionary, “Sabbath,” pp. 764–65)

Introduction

How do you feel when you enter the temple? Read **D&C 109:13**. What makes it different from other places? In Genesis 2:1-3, the Lord instituted the Sabbath. What makes it different from other days?

This lesson is about the Sabbath day. In many ways, we can “enter” each Sabbath day with the same reverence we feel when we enter the temple. We can remember that the Lord has sanctified the Sabbath and that it is our privilege to worship and serve Him on His day.



The Lord established the Sabbath.

God established the pattern for the Sabbath at the time of the Creation. After laboring for six days, He rested on the seventh and sanctified it as a holy day (Genesis 2:2–3). From the earliest times, He has commanded His children to keep the Sabbath day holy (Bible Dictionary, “Sabbath,” 765).

In **Exodus 20:8–11** and **31:13–17**, the Lord gave the commandment repeated many times throughout the scriptures.

Pay devotions to God by worshipping Him in Sunday Church meetings.

D&C 59:9. The Lord has said, “*Thou shalt go to the house of prayer ... upon my holy day*”.

Attending Church meetings is both an obligation and a privilege. **President Gordon B. Hinckley** said: “*...every sacrament meeting ought to be a spiritual feast and a time of spiritual refreshment*”. (Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley, 563, 564)

Making our attendance spiritually enriching requires coming with an attitude of worship, being punctual, showing reverence, studying lesson material in advance and being prepared to actively participate in discussion, by listening carefully, seeking to strengthen others, and not criticizing speakers or teachers.

In our dispensation, the Lord has again emphasized the importance of the Sabbath. Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord revealed that on this day we should pay our devotions to Him by attending church, partaking of the sacrament, and resting from our labors (D&C 59:9–13).

President Spencer W. Kimball said: “*We do not go to Sabbath meetings to be entertained or even solely to be instructed. We go to 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 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*” (“The Sabbath—A Delight,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1978, 4–5).

Next Week

#17 *The Law of Tithing and the Law of the Fast* (D&C 59:13–14, 21; 119; 120)

Lesson Highlights

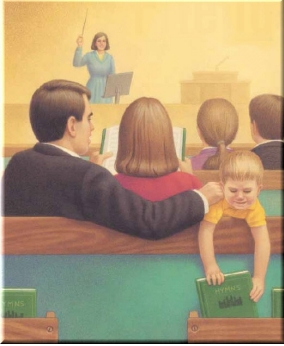
- The Lord established the Sabbath.
- Pay devotions to God by worshipping Him in Sunday Church meetings.
- Pay devotions to God by partaking of the sacrament.
- Pay devotions to God by resting from your labors.
- The Lord blesses those who keep the Sabbath day holy.

A study of this lesson will help us strengthen our desire to keep the Sabbath day holy.



Consider how you can better prepare for Sunday meetings. How can parents help their children benefit more fully from Sunday meetings?

Inspirational music is an essential part of our church meetings. The hymns invite the Spirit of the Lord, create a feeling of reverence, unify us as members, and provide a way for us to offer praises to the Lord.



All members, whether musically inclined or not, are encouraged to join with in singing the hymns. (See D&C 25:12.) Consider how singing the hymns has blessed you.

Elder Boyd K. Packer expressed concern that “an increasing number of our leaders and members do not sing the congregational songs.” He then counseled, “We should sing the songs of Zion—they are an essential part of our worship” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 22).

How can we participate meaningfully in congregational prayers in Sunday meetings?

Why is reverence important in Church meetings?

Consider how you can improve reverence in Church meetings.

Elder Boyd K. Packer said that we should be reverent in the chapel so we do not intrude “*when someone is struggling to feel delicate spiritual communications.*” He also cautioned that reverence “*does not equate with absolute silence. We must be tolerant of little babies, even an occasional outburst from a toddler being ushered out*” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 22).

President Gordon B. Hinckley told of an embarrassing incident he experienced as a missionary: “*We held our meetings in the ... town hall, which we rented. The floors were hard, and ... every time a chair moved there was a noise. But this was not the worst aspect of the situation. Far worse was the noisy socializing of the members of the branch.*”

“*On one occasion we invited a family whom we had met while tracting. With great expectation we as missionaries stood by the door to welcome them. There was the usual convivial spirit in the hall, with the members talking noisily one with another. When this family came into the room, they quietly moved toward some chairs, knelt for a moment, and closed their eyes in a word of prayer. They then sat in an attitude of reverence amidst all the commotion.*”

“*Frankly, I was embarrassed. They had come to what they regarded as a worship service, and they behaved themselves accordingly.*”

“*At the close of the meeting they left quietly, and when we next met they spoke of their disappointment in what they had experienced. I have never forgotten that*” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 557).

Pay devotions to God by partaking of the sacrament.



Gethsemane – Adam Abram

D&C 59:9, 12. The Lord has commanded us to partake of the sacrament on the Sabbath.

D&C 59:9; 3 Nephi 18:6–7. It is important to partake of the sacrament each week in order to remain unspotted from the world, to remember the atoning sacrifice of the Lord, and to have His spirit with us.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin said: “*Windows must be washed regularly to clean away dust and dirt. ... Just as earthly windows need consistent, thorough cleaning, so do the windows of our spirituality. ... By partaking of the sacrament worthily to renew our baptismal covenants, we clarify our view of life’s eternal purpose and divine priorities. The sacrament prayers invite personal introspection, repentance, and rededication as we pledge our willingness to remember our Savior, Jesus the Christ*” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 103; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 77).

On the Sabbath we not only partake of the sacrament, but we also should offer our own sacraments and oblations to the Lord (D&C 59:9, 12). This means we should make offerings or sacrifices that show our devotion to Him.

Joseph F. Smith:

“A good modern ... commandment might read something like this: Do not so overwork and fret on Saturday as to deprive the Sabbath of the devotions and worship that belong to it as a day of rest.”

(Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith, 230)



D&C 59:8; footnote b for **D&C 59:12**; **64:34**; **97:8**. Our offerings or sacrifices should include a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Also, our time, talents, or means, in service of God and fellowman. We must offer up our selves in honesty, obedience, and humility to His glory and service.

Elder M. Russell Ballard said: *"After His mortal ministry, ... Jesus told his Nephite Apostles that He would no longer accept burnt offerings but that His disciples should offer 'a broken heart and a contrite spirit' (3 Ne. 9:19–20; see also D&C 59:8, 12). Instead of the Lord requiring our*

Pay devotions to God by resting from your labors.

D&C 59:10 revealed that we should "rest from [our] labors". Resting from our labors shows that we place the Lord first, above other concerns and desires on that day.

Resting from labors includes avoiding such activities as buying and selling, attending amusements and sporting events, and other such worldly diversions that draw our attention away from the intended purposes of the Lord's day. In addition, we should avoid mental and emotional "labors" which sap our energy and drain our spirits. There is time enough on other days to worry and bear a load of heavy cares. The Sabbath should be a day of renewal on all fronts.

H. David Burton said: *"Now, I know it's hard, particularly for our young people, to choose to observe the Sabbath day when athletic teams on which they so much want to participate regularly schedule games on Sunday. I too know it seems trivial to many who are in need of just a few items on the Sabbath to quickly stop at a convenience store to make a Sunday purchase. But I also know that remembering to keep the Sabbath day holy is one of the most important commandments we can observe in preparing us to be the recipients of the whisperings of the Spirit"* (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 9; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 9).

While resting from our labors is appropriate, that in no way means that we should be idle. Instead, we should follow the Savior's example and do well on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:12; see also Luke 13:10–17; John 5:1–19).

animals or grain, now He wants us to give up all that is ungodly. This higher practice of the law of sacrifice reaches into the inner soul of a person. ...

"... When we overcome our own selfish desires and put God first in our lives and covenant to serve Him regardless of the cost, we are then living the law of sacrifice" ("The Law of Sacrifice," *Ensign*, Oct. 1998, 10–11).

President Spencer W. Kimball taught: *"The Sabbath is a holy day in which to do worthy and holy things. Abstinance from work and recreation is important, but insufficient. The Sabbath calls for constructive thoughts and acts, and if one merely lounges about doing nothing on the Sabbath, he is breaking it. To observe it, one will be on his knees in prayer, preparing lessons, studying the gospel, meditating, visiting the ill and distressed, writing letters to missionaries, taking a nap, reading wholesome material, and attending all the meetings of that day at which he is expected"* (*Ensign*, Jan. 1978, 4).

We should endeavor to ensure that our Sabbath activities honor God, are spiritually uplifting, nurture faith, strengthen the family, help or bless others, and are set apart from the daily activities of the world.

Ponder specific ways you can make the Sabbath more meaningful for you and your family.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said, *"Let the Latter-day Saints be in their homes, teaching their families, reading the scriptures, doing things that are wholesome and beautiful and communing with the Lord on the Sabbath day"* ("Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley," *Ensign*, July 1996, 73).

President Hinckley also counseled: *"Now I do not want to be prudish. I do not want you to lock your children in the house and read the Bible all afternoon to them. Be wise. Be careful. But make that day a day when you can sit down with your families and talk about sacred and good things"* (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 559–60).

President Spencer W. Kimball:

"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."

(*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball* (1982), 219.)



The First Presidency gave the following counsel when announcing the consolidated Sunday meeting schedule in 1980:

"A greater responsibility will be placed upon the individual members and families for properly observing the Sabbath day. More time will be available for personal study of the scriptures and family-centered gospel study. ..."

The Lord blesses those who keep the Sabbath day holy.

D&C 59:9, 13, and 15-17 enumerate the blessings the Lord promises to those who keep the Sabbath holy and do not defile it.

D&C 59:9 mentions that we need to stay "unspotted from the world". We may do that through practicing repentance, renewing our baptismal covenants, and directing our thoughts to spiritual concerns and items of eternal significance instead of material and temporal subjects.

D&C 59:13 reminds us that we may receive a fullness of joy from Sabbath observance. Ideally, the rest and rededication of the Sabbath will help us feel physically, mentally, and emotionally renewed before the beginning of our

Conclusion

Examine how you might improve your observance of the Sabbath. As we keep this day holy, the Lord will bless us with increased spiritual strength and joy.

Additional Teachings

Suggestions to help those who must work on Sunday

Although there are times when employers require Sunday work, Latter-day Saints should make conscious decisions to select careers that do not require constant Sunday work. As we counsel with employers, we should request that our desires to keep the Sabbath holy are considered in work scheduling. We should also assure that if we are able to attend

The Lord blesses us collectively as we keep the Sabbath day holy

In addition to blessing us individually as we keep the Sabbath day holy, the Lord also blesses us collectively. For example, He may bless us as a church or a community. This emphasizes the need for us to unite in keeping the Sabbath day holy.

Bible Dictionary – Sabbath: *"The importance of a sacred day for man to rest from his temporal labors, contemplate the world of the Lord, and assemble*

"It is expected that this new schedule of meetings and activities will result in greater spiritual growth for members of the Church" (Church News, 2 Feb. 1980, 3).

D&C 59:14. The Sabbath should be a day of prayer.

typical workweek. If we fully observe the Sabbath, we often feel—and are—more productive on the six workdays.

D&C 59:16-17 contains the Lord's promise that proper Sabbath observance brings *"the fullness of the earth"* and *"the good things...of the earth"* to us (Isaiah).

D&C 59:14 reminds us that the Sabbath was meant to be a day of *"rejoicing"*, yet many regard it as a day of limitations and regulations, restricting freedom.

One way to make the Sabbath a delight is to concentrate on that which we *can do* rather than that which we *should not do*. A positive, grateful attitude and seeking positive opportunities overcomes the limitations if we let it.

meetings and partake of the sacrament in a different ward before or after our Sunday work hours, we take that opportunity so that there is as little negative effect on us as possible. If it is not possible to attend Church meetings, then we should at least devote our free Sunday time to study of the scriptures and appropriate Sabbath activities for ourselves or with our family.

for public worship is a major item in person's spiritual development. ... [D]ecay in the national religious life always follows any tendency toward carelessness in the matter of Sabbath observance. The existence of a weekly holy day is a most important safeguard; it leaves a constant reminder to the individual of his need for spiritual sustenance and his duty before God, and serves as a witness to the world that there is such a thing as revealed religion".

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- How have you been able to make the ordinance of the sacrament more meaningful in your life?
- How have you determined what is appropriate for you to do on the Sabbath?
- How have you been able to make the Sabbath a day of rejoicing and *"a delight"* in your life?

