

D&C#16 "Thou Shalt...Offer Up Thy Sacraments Upon My Holy Day"

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I. Introduction: The Lord Established the Sabbath

Whenever I think about the Sabbath Day, my thoughts immediately go to the Ten Commandments. These commandments were given by Jehovah [The pre-mortal Jesus Christ] on Mount Sinai. They were written on stone tablets for Moses and the children of Israel.

Exodus 20:8-11

- 8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.**
9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:
10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy GOD: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:
11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

The Sabbath Day did not, however, begin with Moses and the children of Israel. It had its beginning with the creation of the earth.

Genesis 2:1-3

- 1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.**
2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

The Sabbath day began following the creation of the earth. It was a day God "blessed...and sanctified."

Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition states,

"**sanctified.** 1 a) dedicated; consecrated b) made holy." (*Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition.* New York: Prentice Hall, 1988, [1994], 1187).

The LDS Bible Dictionary states,

"...the Sabbath is an eternal principle, and would have existed from the days of Adam, whenever the gospel was on the earth among men.

"After the return from the exile Nehemiah made the observance of the Sabbath one of the chief points of his reformation (Nehemiah 10:31; 13:15-22), and the strictness with which it was kept by the Jews became a well-known fact. In the course of time many regulations grew up, and were observed by the Pharisees. One of the charges frequently brought against the Lord was that of Sabbath breaking, but this was because he failed to conform to the traditions and man-made regulations concerning the Sabbath. Jesus obeyed the letter and the spirit of the Sabbath, but was not obligated to follow the traditions of the elders of the Jews.

"After the ascension of Christ, the members of the Church, whether Jews or gentiles, kept holy the first day of the week (the Lord's day) as a weekly commemoration of our Lord's resurrection (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10); and by degrees the observance of the seventh day was discontinued." (**Sabbath**, in LDS Dictionary. *Holy Bible.* Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, 765).

Today, honoring of the Sabbath Day has become associated with those who consider themselves to be followers of Jesus Christ. It is a day of worship and the renewing of sacred covenants.

The Prophet Isaiah understood the importance of keeping the Sabbath Day holy. He lived at a time in Israel's history when many had neglected keeping the Sabbath.

Isaiah 58:13-14

13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Donald W. Parry, Jay A. Parry and Tina M. Peterson state,

"On the Sabbath, only the Lord's work is to be accomplished. Yet even in the earliest day of Israel as a nation, some resented the Sabbath's interruption of their merchandising and worldly pursuits (Amos 8:5). Here the Lord is challenging his people to do his will on the Sabbath, not their own.

If we obey the Sabbath with pure hearts, not only will we find joy in our obedience but we will find joy in the Lord himself...The holy mount, or the temple, would be the high places on which the Lord treads (Deut. 33:29; Micah 1:2-3; Hab. 3:19). Thus, those mortals 'who ride upon the high places' are those who are blessed to be where the Lord is." (*Understanding Isaiah*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1998, 517).

*Why do you think the commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy has been so important throughout the ages?

When we seek after our own pleasures, including the engaging in merchandising or shopping on Sunday, or even treating the Sabbath like any other day of the week, the Lord is not pleased with us. It is His desire that on His holy day, we gather together to seek His guidance and direction and renew our covenants with Him. When we choose to honor the Lord on the Sabbath and treat it as a day of

delight, we will find renewed strength and peace in our lives.

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).

II. Pay Devotions to God by Worshipping Him in Sunday Church Meetings

Doctrine and Covenants 59:9

9 And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer [chapel] and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day;

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading of Section 59 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, in Zion, Jackson County, Missouri, August 7, 1831. Preceding this revelation, the land was consecrated, as the Lord had directed, and the site for the future temple [Independence] was dedicated. On the day this revelation was received, Polly Knight, the wife of Joseph Knight Sr., died, the first Church member to die in Zion. Early members characterized this revelation as 'instructing the Saints how to keep the sabbath and how to fast and pray.'" (Heading: Section 59. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 108).

*Why do you think it is important to meet together to worship God on the Sabbath?

While some would argue that in the home or in nature we find just as satisfactory a place to worship on the Sabbath, we meet together as a congregation of believers for the purpose of edifying and enlightening each other. For example, as noted in D&C#15, we receive "gifts of the Spirit," not just for our own growth and spiritual development, but so that we might also lift up others.

*How is attending Church meetings on Sunday a blessing to

you?

For those with young children, or rebellious teenagers, one might wonder if all the effort and work required to get their family to their Church meetings on Sunday is a blessing. Having persevered through the challenges, I can assure you that for them and for you, it is worth it. Someday, you will also view them going through the same process with their children, for they do appreciate the blessings that come when a family worships together with others. The outpouring of the Spirit and the various manifestation of talents, including music, by all make the whole greater than any one part.

Gordon B. Hinckley states,

"Every sacrament meeting ought to be a spiritual feast. It ought to be a time of meditation and introspection, a time for singing songs of praise to the Lord, a time for renewing one's covenants with him and our Eternal Father, a and time for hearing the word of the Lord with reverence and appreciation...It is not easy to keep oneself unspotted from the world. Each of us needs all the help he can get. The Lord has given us direction in how to achieve this." ("The Priesthood of Aaron," in *Ensign*, November, 1982, 47).

*How can we help accomplish this?

*How can we make our own attendance at other Sunday meetings more spiritually enriching?

By faithfully attending our meetings each Sunday. By coming to our meetings on time and in an attitude of worship. By both contributing and receiving the insights and understanding of others. By not criticizing either the speakers or the teachers, realizing they have prepared themselves to receive the spirit so that they might strengthen others.

Spencer W. Kimball offered this observation,

"We do not go to the Sabbath meetings to be entertained or ever 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 worships the Lord in spirit and truth, he may do so by attending the 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," in *Ensign*, January 1978, 4-5).

*What can we do to prepare ourselves for Sunday meetings?

By remembering the purpose of our meeting together is to be enriched by the spirit. Arriving on time so that we may read a few verses of scripture to remind us we have come to be taught by the spirit, and by adding to the reverence of the meeting by speaking softly to others.

*How can parents help their children benefit more fully from Sunday meetings?

A few ideas include: (1) Taking young children to the bathroom before the meeting begins; (2) Encourage them to sit quietly and provide spiritual pictures to remind them we are here to learn about Jesus, (3) Speak to them quietly and reverently, and (4) Praise their efforts to be attentive.

*How can music enhance our Sunday meetings?

The First Presidency states regarding music,

"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.

"In addition to blessing us as Church and family members, the hymns can greatly benefit us as individuals. Hymns can lift our spirits, give us courage, and move us to righteous action. They can fill our souls with heavenly thoughts and bring us a spirit of peace." ("First Presidency Preface. *Hymns Of The Church of Jesus Christ Of Latter-Day Saints*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985, ix-x).

*Why is it important that each of us sings the hymns?

Doctrine and Covenants 25:12

**12 For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart;
yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me,
and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their
heads.**

Remember, it was only three months after the organization of the Church, that Emma Smith was directed by the Lord to make a selection of sacred hymns for the church. (see D&C 25:11.)

Boyd K. Packer expressed concern that,

"...an increasing number of our leaders and members do not sing the congregational songs...We should sing the songs of Zion--they are an essential part of our worship."
("Reverence Invites Revelation," in *Ensign*, November 1991, 22).

*How has singing the hymns blessed you?

Being a good singer is not a requirement to sing the hymns of the Church. As we sing the words, while listening to the music, often the Spirit can bear witness to us of the truthfulness of the Gospel and the love Our Heavenly Father has for each of us. Singing of the hymns can also be a prayer of gratitude for the blessings we have received.

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

Boyd K. Packer further reminds us,

"[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." ("Reverence Invites Revelation," in *Ensign*, November 1991, 22).

Gordon B. Hinckley shared an experience from his mission,

"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." ("Reverence and Morality," in *Ensign*, May 1987, 45).

*How can we improve reverence in Church meetings?

Reverence begins with me. If I am reverent, it will invite others to also be reverent. If I talk loudly and socialize with others, without consideration for those around me, others will follow. If I take my seat and bow my head and offer a prayer that I might be receptive to His Spirit, others may also follow. If not, I have at least contributed toward improving the reverence in the meeting.

III. Pay Devotions to God by Partaking of the Sacrament

Preparatory to the organization of the Church, the sacramental prayers on the bread and water were restored to Joseph Smith. (see D&C 20:77,79.) On April 6, 1830, the sacrament was administered for the first time to the members of the newly organized Church.

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

"On the occasion of the organization of the Church and after other business had been attended to, the little group, partook of the Sacrament. This was the first time, since before the apostasy, hundreds of years ago, that the sacrament had been administered acceptably and with divine

approval and in accordance with the manner which the Lord had revealed." (*Church History and Modern Revelation. Course of Study Melchizedek Priesthood, 1947. Salt Lake City: The Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946, 94*).

The Lord has commanded us to partake of the sacrament on the Sabbath.

Doctrine and Covenants 59:9, 12

9 And 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.

12 But remember that on this, the Lord's day, thou shalt offer thine oblations [offerings] and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"Both ancient and modern Israel were commanded to offer their *oblations* unto the Lord. (Lev. 7:38; 2 Chron. 31:14.) In the highest spiritual sense, the offering of an oblation consists in giving full devotion to the Lord, of offering him a broken heart and a contrite spirit (D&C 59:8-12; 3 Ne. 9:19-20.) In a lesser and more temporal sense, an oblation is the offering of sacrifices, or of fast offering, or of any charitable contribution to the Church. (Ezek. 44:30.) Isaiah spoke of *vain oblations* meaning the ritualistic offering of sacrifices when the spirit and meaning of the ordinance and offering had been lost. (Isa. 1:13.) Ezekiel foretold that oblations would again be offered by Israel in the day of gathering. (Ezek. 20:33-44.)" (*Mormon Doctrine. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, [Second Edition, 1966], 541-542*).

Jesus Christ taught the Nephites regarding the importance of the sacrament during his appearance to them.

3 Nephi 18:6-7

6 And this [sacrament] shall ye always observe to do, even as I have done, even as I have broken bread and blessed it and given it unto you.

7 And this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you. And it shall be a testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you.

*Why is it important to partake of the sacrament each week?

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

"The Sacrament meeting of the Church is the most important meeting we have, and sadly neglected by many members. We go to this service, if we understand the purpose of it, not primarily to hear someone speak, important though that may be, but first, and most important, to renew our covenant with our Father in Heaven in the name of Jesus Christ. Those who persist in their absence from this service will eventually find themselves denying the faith." (*Church History and Modern Revelation*. Course of Study Melchizedek Priesthood, 1947. Salt Lake City: The Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946, 123).

Joseph B. Wirthlin adds,

"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. This commitment to become like Christ, repeated weekly, defines the supreme aspiration of Latter-day Saints life." ("Windows of Light and Truth," in *Ensign*, November 1995, 77).

*How has partaking of the sacrament been a blessing in your life?

As I weekly partake of the sacrament, I have the opportunity to remember the sacrifice of my Savior as He took upon Himself my sins. As I strive to keep His commandments and repent from my transgressions, I will have His Spirit to be with me as I go forward with my life.

*How can we prepare ourselves to partake of the sacrament?

By reviewing my week and asking forgiveness for my sins. By remembering it was my sins that caused Him to bleed from every pore. By thinking about the love both the Father and His Son have for me makes me want to do better.

*How can parents help their children prepare for this ordinance?

*How does singing the sacrament hymn help you prepare?

As I review the words of the song in my mind, I am again reminded of this special sacrifice by the Savior and its importance for me.

*How does the sacrament prayers help you prepare?

As I read them again, I am reminded of the covenant that is being renewed between myself and God, as I partake of the sacrament.

*Why must we be worthy when we partake of the sacrament?

1 Corinthians 11:28-29

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

B/M, 3 Nephi 18:29

29 For whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul; therefore if ye know that a man is unworth to eat and drink of my flesh and blood ye shall forbid him.

B/M, Mormon 9:29

29 See that ye are not baptized unworthily; see that ye partake not of the sacrament of Christ unworthily; but see that ye do all things in worthiness, and do it in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God; and if ye do this, and endure to the end, ye will in nowise be cast out.

These three scriptures warn us not to partake of the sacrament knowing we are unworthy. If we do, then we are making a mockery of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and negating the covenant that we made with Him to always remember Him and to keep His commandments. It is important that we do not add further condemnation upon our sinful soul and our repentance is complete before we again partake of the sacrament.

*How can we keep our minds and hearts focused on Jesus as we partake of the sacrament?

Reviewing the prayers of the sacrament; Reading verses from the scriptures regarding his atonement; and, Imagining what He must have experienced as He bore the pain of my sins, help me to keep my mind and heart focused on Jesus' offering for me.

We should remember that it is not just on Sunday that we think about the Savior, His life and teachings, but throughout the week. We strive to be like Him in both word and deed every day of the week.

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"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." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 99).

*What offerings/sacrifices should we offer?

Doctrine and Covenants 59:8 [underline added]

8 Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

In D&C 59:12, footnote b, reminds us that our oblations include our, "offerings, whether of time, talents, or means, in service of God and fellowman."

Doctrine and Covenants 64:34

34 Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days.

Doctrine and Covenants 97:8

8 Verily I say unto you, all among them who know their hearts are honest, and are broken, and their spirits contrite [repentant], and are willing to observe their covenants by sacrifice--yea, every sacrifice which I, the Lord, shall command--they are accepted of me.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 97 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, August 2, 1833. This revelation deals particularly with the affairs of the Saints in Zion, Jackson County, Missouri, in response to the Prophet's inquiry of the Lord for information. Members of the Church in Missouri were at this time subjected to severe persecution and, on July 23, 1833, had been forced to sign an agreement to leave Jackson County." (Heading: Section 97. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 187).

M. Russell Ballard states,

"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' (B/M, 3 Nephi 9:19-20; see also D&C 59:8, 12). Instead of the Lord requiring our animals or grain, now He wants us to give up all that is ungodly. This higher price

of the law of sacrifice reaches into the inner soul of the 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," in *Ensign*, October 1998, 10).

IV. Paying Devotion to God by Resting from Your Labors

Doctrine and Covenants 59:10

10 For verily this [Sabbath] is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High;

*What does it mean to rest from our labors?

The word "rest from our labors" means to refrain from our daily work or occupation.

Gordon B. Hinckley states,

"On July 24, 1847, the pioneer company of our people came into this valley...The next day, Sabbath services were held both in the morning and in the afternoon. There was no hall of any kind in which to meet. I suppose that in the blistering heat of that July Sunday they sat on the tongues of their wagons and leaned against the wheels while the brethren spoke. The season was late, and they were faced with a gargantuan and immediate task if they were to grow seed for the next season. But, President Young pleaded with them not to violate the Sabbath then or in the future.

"On that first Sabbath in the Salt Lake Valley, President Brigham Young told the brethren that they must not work on Sunday and that they would lose five times as much as they would gain by it." ("An Ensign to the Nations," in *Ensign*, November 1989, 51; and Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6. London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1859, 277-278).

*How does resting from our labors show our devotion to God?

When we refrain from engaging in our daily work or occupation, it means that we set aside the effort and

energy we expend in earning our living, and dedicate it instead to the service of the Lord. Our priority on the sabbath is to honor and serve the Lord, rather than our own interests.

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"As part of resting from our labors, we should refrain from buying or selling, going to places of amusement, and other worldly interests on the Sabbath (see Isaiah 58:13, noting the phrases 'turn away...from doing thy pleasure' and 'not doing thine own ways.'" (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 90).

*What activities seem to take away from the spirit of the Sabbath for you?

Viewing sporting events, watching movies, going out to eat, are all activities that I enjoy doing, but I do not do them on the Sabbath. I have learned that they cause be to be distracted me from the spirit of the Sabbath.

*What are some worldly cares that tend to intrude on the Sabbath?

Work obligations, having to travel on Sunday, and, needing an item from the store.

*How can we free ourselves from these cares?

H. David Burton states,

"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 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 recipients of the whispering of the Spirit." ("A Season of Opportunity," in *Ensign*, November 1998, 9).

George Albert Smith states,

"I want to say that you lose every time you violate the Sabbath day, you lose more than you can gain, no matter what you think you are going to gain." (*Conference Report*, October 1948, 188).

Resting from our labors does not mean we should be idle. Rather, we should follow the Savior's example and "do well on the sabbath days (Matthew 12:12)."

*What activities do you think are good to do on the Sabbath?

Spencer W. Kimball taught,

"The Sabbath is a holy day in which to do worthy and holy things. Abstinence from work and recreation is important, but insufficient. The Sabbath calls for constructive thought 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, take a nap, reading wholesome material, and attend all the meetings of that day at which he is expected." ("The Sabbath--A Delight," in *Ensign*, January 1978, 4).

*How can we determine what is appropriate for us to do on the Sabbath?

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual offers the following guidelines for Sabbath,

"...ensuring that our 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." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 91).

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...

"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 February 1980, 3).

The Sabbath should also be a day of prayer.

Doctrine and Covenants 59:14

14 Verily, this is fasting and prayer, or in other words, rejoicing and prayer.

*In what ways could we be more prayerful on this day?

The Sabbath can be a time for spiritual rejuvenation. Time for meditation, for scripture reading and contemplation, for seeking understanding and guidance, for listening to the words of our Prophets and Apostles, all designed to increase our spirituality and direct our thoughts toward heaven.

*What are some challenges to making the Sabbath day as meaningful as you would like?

*How could careful planning help you eliminate or manage these challenges?

V. The Lord Blesses Those Who Keep the Sabbath Day Holy

Doctrine and Covenants 59:9

9 And that thou mayest morefully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day.

a. "unspotted from the world"

It involves helping us to repent, renew our baptismal covenants, and to focus our thoughts on God and matters of eternal significance rather than on the things of the world."

Doctrine and Covenants 59:13

13 And on this day thou shalt do none other thing, only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart that thy fasting may be perfect, or, in other words, that thy joy may be full.

b. "Let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart"

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler state,

"The heart is to be turned wholly to the Lord on his day. This is not a commandment precluding nice meals on the Lord's day, but rather that those that prepare meals and those that receive of the bounty of the Lord recognize the hand from whom all blessings flow. This was the practice of the meridian-day Church of which we read, "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:46)." (*Revelations of the Restoration*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000, 433-434).

c. "That thy fasting may be perfect"

Stephen E. Robinson and H. Dean Garrett state,

"In a figurative sense, the Sabbath day itself, when properly observed, may be understood as a fast; not a fast from food and water, but from the worldly concerns of the rest of the week. If we can truly fast from our weekday concerns on the Sabbath, we can enter into the full joy of the Lord's day." (*A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*, Vol. 2. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2001, 165).

*How has proper observance of the Sabbath helped you feel physically and spiritually strengthened?

*How has it help you be more productive on the other days of the week?

Doctrine and Covenants 59:15

15 And inasmuch as you do these things with thanksgiving, with cheerful hearts and countenances,

not with much laughter, for this is sin, but with a glad heart and a cheerful countenance—

d. "with cheerful hearts and countenances"

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler state,

"The Lord's day should be the most joyful day of the week. The Saints are to gather together in joy and gladness, rejoicing in that which they have received at the hand of the Lord. The Sabbath should be a day of rest from worldly cares. Anciently, the Lord admonished his people to 'call the sabbath a delight,' a day to 'delight thyself in the Lord" (Isaiah 58:12-14). True delight and joy comes from the peace of the Spirit, which is to be sought with particular attention on the Lord's day." (*Revelations of the Restoration*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000, 434).

e. "Not with much laughter, for this is sin"

Stephen E. Robinson and H. Dean Garrett state,

"The Lord doesn't have anything against happiness, gladness, or cheerfulness, as demonstrated by the last half of this verse. The prohibition against "much laughter" here should be understood as meaning prohibition against that state of silliness, giddiness, loss of dignity, and loss of control in which people are more prone to cross the line of propriety to make light of sacred things, to mock that which is good, or to make fun of others." (*A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*, Vol. 2. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2001, 165-166).

Doctrine and Covenants 59:16-17

**16 Verily I say, that inasmuch as ye do this, the fulness of the earth is yours, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and that which climbeth upon the trees and walketh upon the earth;
17 Yea, and the herb, and the good things which come of the earth, whether for food or for raiment, or for houses, or for barns, or for orchards, or for gardens, or for vineyards;**

f. "the fullness of the earth" and "the good things...of the

earth"

(a-f. see *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 91-92, letters added).

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler state,

"Sabbath observance is a principle with a promise. Those living this principle are promised a richness and prosperity that will not be known to others." (*Revelations of the Restoration*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000, 435).

*How have you seen this promise fulfilled?

*What are some other ways that you and your family have been blessed as you have kept the Sabbath day holy?

*How can we make the Sabbath a day of rejoicing and 'a delight' in our lives?

Russell M. Nelson offered this important counsel,

"[Later in my life] I learned from the scriptures that my conduct and my attitude on the Sabbath constituted a sign between me and my Heavenly Father. With that understanding, I no longer needed lists of dos or don'ts. When I had to make a decision whether or not an activity was appropriate for the Sabbath, I simply asked myself, 'What sign do I want to give to God?' That question has made my choices about the Sabbath day crystal clear. Though the doctrine pertaining to the Sabbath day is of ancient origin, it has been renewed in these latter-days as part of a new covenant with a promise." ("The Sabbath Is a Delight," in *Ensign*, May 2015, 132).

As we apply the word of the Lord regarding the Sabbath day, it's purpose, and importance, we will be better able to determine for ourselves our conduct on the Lord's day.

VI. Conclusions

Since the beginning of this earth, God the Father established the Sabbath day and the importance for us to

rest from our labors on that day. The importance of the keeping the Sabbath day holy was further clarified when Jehovah gave the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai. This commandment was further emphasized by Nehemiah following the return of the Jews and the rebuilding of their temple.

By the time of the mortal ministry of Jesus Christ, the Pharisees had almost destroyed the purpose of the Lord's Sabbath by instituting man-made regulations that made breaking the Sabbath easier than keeping it. They even went to the extreme of condemning Jesus, who had been the giver of the Law to Moses, as a Sabbath violator!

With the restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints upon the earth, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the importance and sacredness of the Sabbath day was confirmed.

We keep the Sabbath day holy as we **pay our devotions to God by worshipping Him in Sunday Church meetings:** It is on Sunday that we gather together to spiritually strengthen and bless the lives of one another as we worship in voice and song. While it may be argued that communing with Deity in nature can enrich one's soul, the truth is that we benefit more when we join with others for sacred worship and instruction.

We keep the Sabbath day holy as we **pay our devotions to God by partaking of the Sacrament:** The most important meeting we attend is the weekly Sacrament meeting. Here we have the opportunity to partake of the sacred emblems of the bread and water, symbolic of the body and blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We renew our covenants to keep God's commandments that we might always have the Spirit of the Lord, as administered by the Holy Ghost, to be with us. We resolve to be more humble and more obedient as we go forth to do the will of the Father.

We keep the Sabbath day holy as we **pay our devotion to God by resting from our labor:** In the world in which we now live, the void in Sabbath worship for many has been replaced by the pursuit of pleasure. The Sabbath of the Lord has become just another day for them to gain wealth rather than worship God. The God of wealth is the God they worship. Only at the death of a loved one or a personal

disaster, do they turn their thoughts to God. For a few brief moments, they realize there is more to life than the endless pursuit of wealth. For some it is a time of change; for others, just a momentary pause, before the next event. All will someday realize that there was more to life than just work or the pleasures money buys.

When we keep the Sabbath day holy, the Lord blesses us: The blessings from our observance of the Sabbath day include, we are kept unspotted from the world; our fasting is perfect; we have cheerful hearts and countenances, and, we enjoy the fullness of the earth and the peace of the Lord in our lives. These are just some of the blessings the Lord has for those who keep His Sabbath holy.

Our next lesson [D&C#17] is upon the value of keeping the law of tithing and obeying the fast.