

## Keep the Sabbath Day Holy

Scripture emphasizes work and diligence. Nevertheless, God has commanded man to only work on six days of the week and rest on the seventh. The Third Commandment given by God says: "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy."

During the lives of past generations, the Sabbath was generally respected. For example, fieldwork was taken for granted as unsuitable work for the Sabbath. Berry picking, hunting, and fishing were also avoided. On Sunday, folks dressed in their best and visited with relatives and friends. They went to listen to God's Word, often traveling long distances to church and services. This spoke of respect for God's Word, upon which the keeping of the Sabbath was based. We can say that as the opposite of the work-filled weekdays, Sunday was characterized by a warm feeling of holiness.

Our society's estrangement from God's Word is seen nowadays also in the observance of the Sabbath. For example, the sight of farming equipment operating on the field is usual on Sundays, and the same is true of the construction clatter heard from houses and yards. It also appears that for many Sunday is one of the best days to go hunting, fishing, or berry picking. Sunday has also become the day for many to attend trade fair-type events, which are colored by light entertainment. With great bargains, businesses try to get people moving especially on Sundays. Sporting competitions are also held on Sundays.

The secularization of the Sabbath attests to people's distancing themselves from what Jesus taught about observing the day of rest. He taught people to do on the Sabbath only that work which is unavoidable and necessary. Included in this, are those duties that must be carried out for the functioning of society and for the good of our near ones.

We can protect the tender holiness of the day of rest. How do we observe it so that even the children notice that this is a different day, a holy day? Are the tasks and hobbies that I choose as unavoidable or necessary right on that day? What do they say about how I relate to the day of rest? Do they make a weekday of the Sabbath, and what do they teach the children? The value of the Sabbath can be emphasized in various ways, for example in dress and even the atmosphere of the home.

We observe the Lord's Day best when its program includes the Word of God. In addition to resting, Sunday is especially meant for studying and listening to God's Word. Getting together with believing friends also edifies faith life. It is good to direct children and young people in their hobbies so that these wouldn't take time and energy away the important content of the Sabbath.

In Proverbs are the words: "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). Life built on the enduring values of Scripture brings blessings to the individual as well as the whole nation. This also applies to the observance of the day of rest ordained by God.