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MINISTRIES

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Why Some Christians Keep the Sabbath

Did you know that there are many Christians around the world who keep the Sabbath? It’s true.

No, we’re not talking about going to church on Sunday morning. While there’s nothing wrong with that, attending church on Sunday morning is not keeping the Sabbath. In fact, the Sabbath isn’t even on Sunday.

According to the Bible, the Sabbath is on the seventh day of the week. Biblical days start when the sun goes down, so the Sabbath lasts from Friday evening to Saturday evening. It is a time to stop working and to rest.

We see this at the very beginning of the Bible. After God finished all his work of creation in six days, the Bible says he rested on the seventh day:

Genesis 2:2-3

[And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.](#)

From the very beginning of creation, the seventh day—the Sabbath—was set apart from the other days of the week as a special day. It was made “holy,” which means it was distinguished from common or regular things—in this case, the other six days of the week on which regular things are done—and dedicated for a sacred purpose.

So why are many Christians today clocking out of work and resting on the seventh day? Well, God gave a commandment that his people are to keep the Sabbath as a memorial of creation. It’s actually one of the Ten Commandments:

Exodus 20:8, 11

[Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy \[...\] For in six days the Lord \[YHWH\] made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord](#)

[YHWH] blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

So, many Christians are keeping the Sabbath simply because God said to do it! Keeping the Sabbath is a sign of our belief and commitment to the fact that our God is the Creator, and he is sovereign over our lives and our time. Like the other nine commandments, the command to keep the Sabbath is important to God—otherwise, he wouldn't have commanded it. Therefore, it ought to be important to us.

But the Sabbath is much more than a rule that God told us to follow. It's a gift from God, and it is intended to be a blessing to all who keep it. Here are some reasons why.

1) The Sabbath is all about Jesus

The Sabbath is a weekly reminder of the Gospel message and the eternal rest we have in the Messiah. This rest we have, by the way, can't be worked for. It's only by the grace of God that we receive eternal life and rest in him.

The Sabbath points us to the Messianic era to come when God's kingdom and presence will fill the earth in fullness. As we rest from our labor every week, we get a small taste of the full blessing that is to come in the future.

Another way the Sabbath reminds us of the Gospel is that it's a memorial not only of creation but also of our deliverance from Egypt:

Deuteronomy 5:15

You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord [YHWH] your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord [YHWH] your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

Here we see that the Sabbath commemorates God delivering Israel from Egypt, a prophetic picture of our own deliverance. Jesus—or Yeshua, as he was known in the first century—rescued us from the slavery of sin and death through his work on the cross.

2) Jesus and the apostles kept the Sabbath

Nowhere in the New Testament does God give Christians a different Sabbath to keep. He never gets rid of the Sabbath nor changes the day. In fact, the practice of Christians throughout the entire New Testament—both Jews and Gentiles—was to continue keeping the Sabbath on the seventh day.

Yeshua said in Matthew 5:17-20 that he did not come to abolish the Law or the prophets but to fulfill them. He even admonished his followers that if they wanted to be great in the kingdom of heaven, they must do and teach *even the least* of the commandments of the Law. The Sabbath, as part of God's Law, was therefore directly affirmed by Yeshua as something his followers were to do.

We know Yeshua himself kept the Sabbath every week (e.g., Luke 4:16).

His followers, including the apostle Paul, also kept the Sabbath—even after Yeshua's death and resurrection (Acts 13:14, 42, 44; 16:13; 17:1-2; 18:4).

Indeed, there is no indication in the Bible that anything about the Sabbath has changed.

But what about Yeshua's confrontations with the Pharisees concerning the Sabbath? Those disputes actually had nothing to do with whether or not to keep the Sabbath. The issue was always over *how* to keep it. While the Pharisees, in many cases, turned the Sabbath into a burden through their strict man-made traditions—distorting the very purpose of the Sabbath, which was to rest—Yeshua emphasized the heart of the Sabbath by pointing back to God's original intent as expressed in the Scriptures. Never did Yeshua say not to keep it.

In Colossians 2, when Paul said not to allow people to pass judgment on you concerning the Sabbath, he didn't say that the Sabbath was abolished or that we didn't have to keep it anymore. He simply warned the Colossian believers not to let certain false teachers (Colossians 2:8) judge them with regard to *how* they kept the Sabbath.

So Yeshua and the apostles continued to keep the Sabbath as part of their faith practice. While they rebuked and warned against certain teachers who had false teachings concerning the Sabbath, they never disputed the Sabbath itself. They continued to keep and teach the Sabbath in accordance with God's command.

Many Christians are keeping the Sabbath today simply because that's what Yeshua and the apostles did. We want to follow their example. We want our faith practice to match, as closely as we can, with what we see in the New Testament.

3) The Sabbath is a joy and a blessing

Another reason Christians keep the Sabbath today is quite simply that it's awesome. For many of us, it's one of the biggest practical blessings in our lives.

In the midst of our high-pressure, fast-paced culture, when it's so easy to become consumed in the every-day toil of life, the Sabbath compels us to *cease*; to stop; to recalibrate and reprioritize our lives around what matters most—our God and our families and the people we love.

We weren't created to work our lives away—to immerse ourselves in nothing but life's daily drudgery. God gave us an incredible gift. In the midst of our fallen world—the thorns and thistles, the sweat of our brow—God breaks through and says, "Cease! Here is a weekly, 24-hour window where you get a peek at what life will be like in my kingdom. Rest from your labor. Enjoy."

We get to rest. We get to spend intentional time with our families. And we get to bless God for who he is and what he's done for us.

As Christians, the Sabbath brings us together. It unifies us in worship and commemoration of meaningful and important events that define our lives—particularly the Gospel message, the greatest story of all time.

The Sabbath brings order and intentionality to our lives when everything else in life is noisy and chaotic.

God wants to bring order and meaning to your life—and one way he does that is through the Sabbath.

On the seventh day, every week, God is inviting you to cease. He is inviting you to rest. Consider joining the Christians around the world who have taken him up on that offer.

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

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