

TO Hallow THE Sabbath Day

The Lord hallowed the Sabbath day and commanded us to do the same. How can we more fully honor His holy day?

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has reminded us that we are “to *hallow* the Sabbath day.” To *hallow* means to greatly revere or respect, to make holy, to sanctify or consecrate. President Nelson related how he came to realize that his conduct and attitude on the Sabbath were actually a sign between him and his Heavenly Father (see Exodus 31:16–17; Ezekiel 20:20). As he learned to ask himself what sign he wanted to give to God, his choices about the Sabbath became very clear.¹

What sign can we give to the Lord to show our love and our devotion to Him? Are there changes we can make in our conduct and our attitude? In the following accounts, members share how they evaluated their Sabbath observance, made changes in their efforts to hallow this special day, and drew closer to the Lord.

Cherishing the Lord’s Holy Day

Shaun Bryan Nish of South Africa owned a successful construction company but felt that he did not have enough time with his family. He and his wife, Esme, decided that he should make a career change.

“After many hours of soul-searching and praying, we decided to sell the company and for me to go into what I enjoy, which is teaching,” says Brother Nish.

This decision required significant financial sacrifice, but Brother and Sister Nish and their four young children were able to make the adjustment. Brother Nish divided his time between working as a new teacher, pursuing a post-graduate certificate of education, serving as a branch president, and being a husband and father.

After teaching high school for a year, Brother Nish felt ready for a new challenge:

teaching for a year out of the country. As he began looking for opportunities, he found that in one country, several employers considered his family of four children a drawback, with some even suggesting that he leave his family behind.

Partaking of the sacrament, involving children in wholesome projects, and being with family are all ways to hallow the Sabbath day.





After months of searching, he finally received an offer from an employer that encouraged him to bring his family with him. There was also a branch of the Church near the school. But there was a complication: Sunday work was required. Brother Nish was torn. He felt that this was the right job for him, but he also knew from President Thomas S. Monson's teachings that decisions can determine our destiny.² "Which road am I following?" wondered Brother Nish.

He tried to reason with his prospective employer and was assured that he could have work off one or two Sundays a month. Encouraged by this, Brother Nish thought, "At least I will be going to church. I will still be the same person." But then his wife reminded him of President Monson's teachings about choices and told him that choosing to work two Sundays a month still meant not being able to keep the Sabbath holy on those days. She counseled him to have faith.

"I followed my wife's counsel and declined the offer," says Brother Nish. "I could not work on the Sabbath. Imagine my delight when three days later I got a phone call from the employer saying they were willing to give me all Sundays off."

Brother Nish concludes, "I learned that faith precedes the miracle and that the Lord wants us to cherish His holy day. I am putting more emphasis on the Sabbath and trying, as President Nelson has counseled, to 'make the Sabbath a delight.'³"

Family Gospel Study on the Sabbath

Sally Olsen and her husband, Maynard, of Utah, USA, began family gospel study with their children in earnest on Sundays when the Church made the change to the consolidated meeting schedule in 1980. At that time, a message from the First Presidency stated, "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."⁴

As the Olsens encouraged gospel study in their home on Sundays, they saw an increase in love and unity in their family. Says Sister Olsen,

"Family home evening, daily scriptures, and family prayer were still consistently done in our home, but we found there is a power that accompanies gospel study on the holy Sabbath." One of the Sunday activities the Olsen

children regularly enjoyed was reading Church magazine articles on their own and then reporting on them during a family gathering later in the day.

"Being consistent about having concentrated gospel study on Sunday has helped all of our 12 children love the Lord, desire to serve Him, and do His will," says Sister Olsen. "We are eternally grateful for the Sabbath day and rejoice in the true delight it is as we focus our families on learning His gospel on His holy day."

Removing Distractions

One Saturday evening, as Benjamin Hardy of South Carolina, USA, contemplated how he might delight more in the upcoming Sabbath day, he decided to try something different: he would set aside email and social media during Sunday.





“I pondered this for a few minutes,” he remembers. “It would be extremely difficult for me. I check my

email, Facebook, and Twitter accounts every few hours—not just for socializing but for work. It’s hard not to unconsciously click the app on my phone to see what’s going on. I also realized that I often check my email and social media during church, family events, and time with friends.”

As Brother Hardy reflected, he felt that refraining from email and social media on Sunday was something he wanted to do to bring him closer to the Savior. He thanked Heavenly Father for the personal insight regarding his email and social media usage. He knew that following through with his plan would not be easy, but he was willing to give it a try.

The next morning, rather than checking his email or social media accounts, Brother Hardy let his wife sleep in while he played with their two little foster children. He says, “Our Sunday morning ritual is to make breakfast and watch a Church movie. Usually I have my phone next to me throughout both. I’m often in and out of reality and only halfway present with my family. However, that Sunday morning my phone stayed in my room. As I cuddled up to our three-year-old, I felt so much love for my wife and two children. I was completely present with them.”

As he partook of the sacrament later that day at church, Brother Hardy came to the conclusion that he wanted to forgo using email and social media on every Sabbath day. Though he knew this was a personal choice that others were not obligated to make, he felt it would help him make the most of the Lord’s day.

“Throughout church and the entire day,” he recalls, “my heart was drawn to the Savior. I more fully remembered Him throughout the day, without distractions. My testimony was strengthened, and I came to realize that my testimony is not just what I know but *who* I know—it is my relationship with my Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.”

Looking at family scrapbooks, serving others, going on a family walk, and sharing music can all bring love and peace on the Sabbath day.



FINDING JOY ON THE SABBATH

“You might well be wondering what you could do to live and worship on this Sabbath day to demonstrate your gratitude and to strengthen yourself and others for trials that lie ahead.

“You could begin today with a private and family prayer of thanks for all God has done for you. You could pray to know what the Lord would have you do to serve Him and others. . . .

“I can promise you your prayers will be answered, and as you act on the answers you will receive, you will find joy in the Sabbath, and your heart will overflow with thankfulness.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Gratitude on the Sabbath Day,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 102.

Blessings of Hallowing the Sabbath

Through Isaiah, the Lord promised:

“If thou turn away . . . 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:

“Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord” (Isaiah 58:13–14).

Such a blessing can be ours as we “turn away” from worldly pursuits and hallow the Lord’s day. For each of us, the signs we give the Lord on His day involve personal decisions, choices that will bless us as we seek to show our love for Him and our desire to be obedient to His commandments. ■

NOTES

1. See Russell M. Nelson, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 130.
2. See, for example, Thomas S. Monson, “Keep the Commandments,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 83.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” 130.
4. First Presidency, in Hal Knight, “Meeting Schedule Approved,” *Church News*, Feb. 2, 1980, 3.

