

TITLE AND NUMBER: 187. The Sabbath Day



REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): Deuteronomy 5:13-15

Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

LOOKING FURTHER: Genesis 2:2-3; Matt.12:1-13; Matt.11:28-30

What does this Bible passage tell us?

This passage is one of the ten commandments which God gave to Moses so that the people had a framework by which they could live. It refers back to the Genesis story where God created the world in six days and then rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2-3). God knew the value of rest and wanted His people to benefit from it, too. He also wanted them to set aside time to get to know Him more deeply.

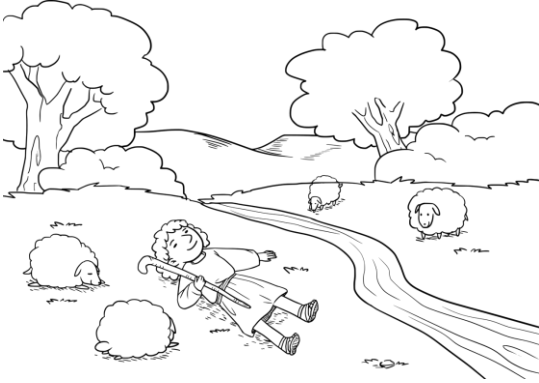
For Jewish people, Saturday is their Sabbath. Christians chose Sunday as that was the day Jesus rose from the dead. Until 1994, it was illegal for most shops to open on Sundays. People tended to spend time with their families, perhaps visiting extended family, or doing something special. Since then, Sundays have become no different from any other day except that Christians usually go to church. Many people do not rest and it is easy for families to get out of the habit of spending time together when life is busy around them. A change from daily routine can be very beneficial.

God had good reasons for giving His people this commandment - and it was for all people and their working animals (v14). Obviously, some people have to work on Sundays and Jesus made it clear that this is fine (Matt.12:1-13). However, they should choose another day for their Sabbath. If we do not set aside time to allow ourselves a rest or a change from the routine of daily life and to draw closer to God, we will either become worn out or bored. And this is not what God wants. He wants us to be healthy in spirit, mind and body (Matt.11:28-30). Keeping the Sabbath day can help us.

Reflections:

- Is Sunday a special day for you in prison or is it just boring because you are locked up for longer? Try thinking of it as a day to spend extra time with God but also a day when you can relax from the usual routine. How could you do this?
- Is there a new hobby which you could take up and just do on Sundays so that it makes that day a bit different?
- When you leave prison, do you need to spend more time with your family? Why not start now by writing to them on Sundays or telephoning them. If you are not in touch with your family or friends, why not write to someone through the *PF Letter Link* programme.

Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



Has God responded to your prayers this week in the way you had hoped for? It's okay to talk to God about this.

