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## The 3rd Commandment

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**Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but regard it as holy and gladly hear and learn it.

### Introduction

Why do people go to church?

### The Sabbath Day

Leviticus 23:3

Why did God command a Sabbath Day and what does this tell us about God? ...ourselves? ...our lives lived in relation to God?

We will spend most of our time talking about the spiritual component of this command (and rightly so!). But before we get to the heart of the matter...

**Should physical rest play a more prominent role in our understanding and application of this command?**

### **Mark 2:27**

**Discuss:** How did OT/NT Jews get the purpose of the Sabbath Day mixed up?

**React:** Lutherans aren't as faithful to the Bible as they claim. They follow 9 of the 10 commandments but ignore the Sabbath Day.

### **Colossians 2:13-17**

## **Keeping It Holy**

**What does it mean to keep something holy?**

### **Number 15:27-36**

**Why does the Lord command that the man be put to death? (Hint: Look at the verses immediately preceding the incident, v. 27-31)**

**Can you think of other examples in the bible where God reacts harshly as a way to emphasize how seriously we are to take his commands?**

**Think of 3 specific ways/times Jesus kept the Sabbath holy on your behalf?**

## **Keeping the Sabbath Day Holy vs. Despising the Word**

**The Small Catechism notes these three ways Christians might despise God's Word:**

- 1) refusing to hear it,
- 2) letting anything in the world crowd it out of our lives, and
- 3) listening to it but not believing it or doing what it says

## Public Worship

Matthew 11:28-29

Hebrews 4:2, 9-11

Using these passages, why did Luther give the explanation he did of what the 3rd commandment means for Christians?

Hebrews 10:25

Why does God want his people to gather together for public worship?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Sometimes Christians think they don't need worship all that much. How do the three reasons given above speak to that temptation?

Luke 8:14

If someone is tempted to irregular worship, what is the real problem? How do we deal with it? How often is enough?

Food for thought:

*While attendance at worship can be an indicator of spiritual straying, it is not the only test for faith nor is it always reliable. Age or illness, for instance, may be legitimate reasons that someone has been absent from worship. Then again, someone straying from the faith may keep up the façade of worship for a long time. Still, regular absence from worship can be an early indication of straying from those who formerly appeared connected to the Gospel in worship.*

*When absence from the Means of Grace seems less than legitimate, the excuses are as many and varied as the people offering them. Work schedules, travel sports, weekend trips, exhaustion, family activities, time at the cabin, children's events, late nights, needing a "day off," frustrations with other Christians, disappointment with the church, political disagreements, hurt feelings, embarrassment over personal sin, doctrinal indifference, or simply "being busy" often become the presenting explanations. At times the excuses sound reasonable, even understandable. Yet beneath them*

*pastors and elders often discover deeper fears, loves, and trusts slowly pulling the heart away from the Gospel. When absence from worship moves from legitimate to an excuse, love compels us to talk to our missing members about what keeps them away from worship and probe, with grace, at what might be replacing God for first place in their hearts. (emphasis mine)*

- Pr. John Koelpin, Essay to the 2026 Michigan District Convention

## **The Church Year and the Way We Worship**

Why do we follow a “church year”?

How is our church year divided?

In what ways do we have freedom when it comes to decisions about HOW we worship?

## **Living the Word**

Hebrews 4:2

James 1:22-24

Put the message of James 1 in your own words.

How does a review of who we are in Christ help us to live the Word as God intends?

## **Personal Bible Study**

Acts 17:10-12

What was so commendable about the Berean Christians?

What are the biggest challenges to a life of personal bible study?