

A few words from the Vicar

A few weeks ago, I preached on the 4th Commandment, which is about setting aside the sabbath as a day for worship and rest.

Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. For six days you shall labour and do all your work. (Deuteronomy 5:12-13)

True, it is easy to become overly legalistic about keeping the sabbath. Some older members of the congregation, for example, recall that, as children, they were not allowed to play out on Sundays. Well, there is no prohibition on having fun on the sabbath, so I am not sure where that idea came from!

It is also easy to see how we can twist ourselves in knots if we try to be overly legalistic. What is work to some, is a rest day hobby for others. What about those whose must work on Sundays so that the rest of us can live in a civilised society? What about those who work so that others can enjoy a day off from work? Very soon, as you begin to apply logic, your brain begins to hurt!

Well, Jesus honoured the sabbath, but criticised those who were overly legalistic and, worse, who attempted to impose their legalism on others. Establishing a rigid set of rules somehow misses the point!

The reality is, of course, today there is very little risk of us falling into such legalism. We face a different challenge. The shops are open seven days a week, many people are required to work on Sundays, and a lot of sport is scheduled for Sundays. Rather, with all this and much, much more, the temptation is to ignore the 4th Commandment altogether.

Obviously, we cannot expect wider society to live by our rules, so those pressures are unlikely to go away. Yet God has given us this Commandment, like the others, for our benefit. From it

we learn that there is a rhythm and balance to life. We learn that there is a time in our lives for work, a time to rest and play, and a time to worship God. Keeping the sabbath rest is important for our spiritual and physical wellbeing. Indeed, Jesus himself informs us that:

'The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath.' Mark 2:27

So, without being legalistic about it, we should take our sabbath rest. But what about those who, due to work or other commitments, cannot treat Sunday as a day for rest, play and worship?

Well, the obvious answer is to take your sabbath rest on another day. And, as I reached that point in my sermon, it dawned on me that this Church does little to help faithful Christians in that situation. Indeed, I am aware of many who struggle to attend church every Sunday. So, here's an offer you can't refuse; if enough people are willing to attend, I am prepared to establish a new mid-week evening service for those of you unable to be with regularly us on Sundays.

Simply register your interest with me and we can take things from there!

Finally, on the subject of worship, on 22nd July we have a service for Wholeness and Healing. This is a quiet service for laying our needs and the needs of others before God; a time to ask Him for spiritual healing and restoration of wholeness. During the service there is an opportunity to receive anointing and prayer.

Come along.

Every Blessing

Dave