

The Biblical Pattern for Work and Worship

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Subtitle: God's seven day cycles

- In the beginning, God created the heavens & the earth & everything in it
- He set the sun, the earth, moon & other planets into space, & by their precise movements, He created days, months and years
- Furthermore, He instituted seasons for sowing and reaping
- Days, months & years are all determined by the movements of our planetary system inside our solar system & cannot be changed or altered
- God also added weeks, which are 7 day cycles that repeat perpetually

1. God is very precious & emphatic about the Seventh Day

Genesis 2:1–3 (NKJV) *Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. 2 And **on the seventh day** God ended His work which He had done, and **He rested on the seventh day from all His work** which He had done. 3 Then **God blessed the seventh day** and **sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.***

- God created the heavens & the earth & everything in it in six days
- He rested on the seventh day
 - He blessed the seventh day
 - He sanctified it (declared it holy & set apart for sacred purposes)
- WHY?
- Vs. 3 **BECAUSE** *in it He rested from all His work ...*
- The seven day cycle of weeks has it's starting point from the time when God rested on the seventh day
- Our seven day week exists only BECAUSE "God created the whole universe in 6 days, and rested on the seventh day"

Observations:

- The **seven-day week has no natural astronomical basis**
- The seven-day cycle is **divine in origin & intent**, not astronomical
- The seven-day week does not come from the lunar or solar cycles
- **The seven day week is there because God wants it there**

- The seven-day week **became global** mainly because of **Jewish and later Christian influence** — not because of any celestial rhythm
- It originates in **biblical and ancient Near Eastern tradition**, later adopted universally through the influence of **Judaism and Christianity**

Exodus 20:8–11 (NKJV) *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.*

- Sabbath – Lit.: cease, rest, desist from labour
- God blessed the 7th day, declared it holy & called it Sabbath Day, a day of “ceasing from customary work”
- He enshrined the Sabbath Day law into the Ten Commandments (4th)
- In Judaism, the weekly Sabbath Day always falls on Saturdays
- **To be clear, Christians do not have to observe the Sabbath Day**
- The Sabbath Day Law (4th Commandment) was specific to Israel
- However, Christians should keep to the Sabbath Day principle
- We look at O.T. practices & derive principles that we should apply in the N.T. practices

Exodus 23:12 (NKJV) *Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed.*

- God’s purpose and intent concerning the seventh day is huge
- In the Law of Moses, the Sabbath Day was a big deal
- Even in Jewish culture today, the Sabbath Day is a big deal
- God commands that all the work is done in six days, with the 7th day set aside for rest

2. The TWO purposes of the Sabbath Day

- a. Rest from customary (occupational) work
- b. Worship God

Leviticus 23:3 (NKJV) 'Six days shall work be done, **but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation.** You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.

- Notice: the seventh day was for two things:
 - a. A solemn rest
 - b. A holy convocation
- A holy convocation
 - NIV: a day of sacred assembly
 - NLT: an official day for holy assembly
 - Vines: a public worship service, an official summons to worship

Exodus 34:21 (NKJV) *Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; **in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.***

- Ploughing time and harvest were the busiest times of the year
- Yet God told them to still rest on the 7th day

3. In New Testament times, Christians met on the 1st day of the week

- The early Church began to meet on Sundays for worship
- Although they were Jews, and had to keep the Sabbath Day on Saturdays (Ex. 31:15), they set Sunday aside for Christian worship services

Acts 20:7 (NKJV) *Now **on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.***

- In Acts chpt. 20, Christians were already in the habit of assembling on Sundays for a fellowship meal (Communion)
- This day became known as the **Lord's Day**
- Ap. Paul preached the Word of God on that day

1 Corinthians 16:2 (NKJV) *On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.*

- The Corinthian church in Greece also gathered to worship on Sundays
- Ap. Paul spoke about receiving an offering on the first day of the week, when they came together to worship God

- Sunday became a type of Sabbath for Christians, a day of rest & worship

Revelation 1:10 (NKJV) *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day ...*

- By the time of Revelation, the “Lord’s Day” was also a recognized day of **spiritual devotion and worship** among Christians
- This shows a shift from the seventh-day Sabbath day (Saturday) to the first-day observance (Sunday)
- Although the **practice** of observing the Sabbath changed from Saturday to Sunday, the **principle of rest and worship remained**

4. The overarching purpose of the Sabbath Day is to honour God

Isaiah 58:13–14 (NKJV) *If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and **call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, 14** Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken.*

- How do I glorify God on the Sabbath?
 - By coming away from my occupational work (if possible)
 - By worshipping God on my day of rest
- In modern times, there has been a gradual departure from Christianity & the purpose of Sundays has become increasingly blurred
- More and more people do as they wish on the Lord’s Day
- However, in God’s purposes for Christians, He still wants us to consider Sunday a Holy Day, and come together to worship Him
- In the OT, the seven day week ended with rest and worship
- In the NT, we begin the week with rest and worship (1st day = Sunday)
- Although we pray & worship God every day, we are called to set aside one day a week for together with other believers for worship