

The Sabbath — a Holy Convocation Open to All!

We know the basic directions given for the Sabbath Day.

1. **A holy convocation.** Leviticus 23:3. *Holy* = *godesh* (6944), “A sacred place or thing.” *Convocation* = *miqra* (4744), “something called out, as a public meeting; a rehearsal.”
2. **A Sabbath of rest.** Leviticus 23:3. No work to be done. Exodus 20:10.
3. **A Feast day.** Leviticus 23:2.
4. **Don’t do your own pleasure.** Isaiah 58:13. Don’t do your own ways.
5. **Make it a delight.** Isaiah 58:13, 14. *Delight* = *oneg* (6027), “delight, pleasant.” In v. 14, *delight* = *anag* (6026), “primitive root, to be soft or pliable.”
6. **Honor God in the day.** Isaiah 58:13.
7. **Don’t speak your own words.** Isaiah 58:13.
8. **A reflection back to the Garden of Eden and the original creation in Genesis 1 and 2.** Exodus 20:11.
9. **A blessed day.** Exodus 20:11. *Blessed* = *barak* (1288), “a primitive root, to kneel, by implication to bless God, as an act of adoration, and to bless man, as a benefit.”
10. **A hallowed day.** Exodus 20:11. *Hallowed* = *qadash* (6942), “a primitive root, to be (causative), make pronounce, or observe.”

Note that Exodus 20:11 shows that the day reflects back to the recreation of the earth. Why is that? **BECAUSE THE NATURE OF THE SABBATH IS LIKE EDEN ITSELF; WE ARE TO LIVE IN THIS DAY AS IF WE WERE IN EDEN ITSELF, AS PICTURED BY THE OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DAY:**

- * A time of delight
- * A time of rest; no work
- * A time of feasting
- * A time of speaking God’s words
- * A time of closeness to God Himself

This is the way mankind will live in the new age, as he did in the original Garden of Eden! Thus, the day also looks forward to the Kingdom of God when Eden will be restored!

But what about today and how we ought to keep this holy convocation? The Apostle Paul gets very specific about this issue in the Book of I Corinthians. Look at the flow of Paul’s thoughts as he wrote to the Corinthians.

Chapter 11: The Passover and the need to partake of the body and blood of Christ.

Chapter 12: Spiritual gifts given to each of us through the spirit of God.

Chapter 13: The nature of love (*agape*), that is even a “better” way that transcends spiritual gifts.

Chapter 14: Conduct of fellowship of the saints at their Sabbath convocations.

Chapter 15: The future for all those called, a culmination of chapters 11 to 14.

I Corinthians 14:1. “Follow after love (*charity, agape*, as in Chapter 13), and desire spiritual gifts (Chapter 12), but rather that you *prophesy*.” *Prophesy* = *propheteuo* (4395); from 4396; “to foretell events, divine, speak under inspiration, exercise the prophetic office.”

Paul is telling *all* of the brethren that they should “follow” (Greek *dioko* [1377], “to flee, to pursue”) love and spiritual gifts, but above all that they should *prophesy*, or speak to the brethren under inspiration! This is not a command to just the elders or “ministers,” but to everyone in the congregation! Notice that he repeats this command in verse 39, where he says they must “covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.” *Covet* = *zeloo* (2206), “to have warmth or feeling for.”

Paul gives specific guidelines for exercising this prophetic speaking. See verses 26-33. The instructions are as follows:

“translation”

- * All things are to be done in order.
- * Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should *judge* (v. 29; *diakrino* [1252], “to withdraw from or [by implication] oppose; figuratively, to discriminate [by implication, decide], or [reflexively] hesitate. Translated “contend, differ, discern, doubt, judge, by partial, stagger, waver”).
- * Speaking in tongues is not to be discouraged as long as those tongues are interpreted.
- * Offerings are to be given during fellowship: a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation (v. 26)

Psalm = *psalmos* (5568), “a set piece of music, a sacred ode (accompanied with the voice, harp, or other instrument)”

Doctrine = *didache* (1322), “instruction (the act or the matter)”

Tongue = *glossa* (1100), “the tongue, by implication a language (specially, one naturally unacquired)”

Revelation = *apokalupsis* (602), “disclosure”

Interpretation = *hermeneia* (2058),

It is clear from this message of Paul to the Corinthians that Sabbath services are to be an “open forum” to allow the gifts of the spirit and agape love to prevail, and above all for inspired prophetic speaking to be encouraged amongst whomever in the congregation is inspired at the time ... with others in the congregation free to judge and evaluate what is said, to “cross-examine”, as it were. These are the guidelines for fellowship that all Christians are encouraged to emulate, since these truths are revealed in Scripture. So often we are captive and habituated by the society in which we grew up, and we need to extract ourselves from the trappings of Catholicism and Protestantism, which groups operate usually through a set liturgy. God instructs us to “Come out of her my people” (Revelation 18:4). Let us strive after the faith delivered to the saints in the time of the apostles, and not fail to serve and obey our Creator in all things.

Below: This is similar to how the brethren met and fellowshiped in New Testament times. Today we call it :home fellowship,” though the early church did on occasion meet in synagogues, or even schools.

