

Sunday

Fall

2019



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MISSION: The Lord's Day Alliance of the United States exists to encourage all people to receive God's great gift of Sabbath rest and to encourage all Christians to worship the risen Lord Jesus Christ, on the Lord's Day—Sunday—that they may be renewed in spirit and empowered to live lives worthy of the Gospel.

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Remembering Roger Kvam

Roger is remembered for his many years on the LDA Board of Managers, having served two terms as LDA President. He was pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Cranberry, New Jersey, then served two United Church of Christ congregations. Following work as President of Mackinac College, Michigan, and additional graduate studies at Harvard and Boston University, he accepted a call to the First Presbyterian Church of Quincy, Massachusetts. Roger continued to be active as a pastor of several Presbyterian churches in South Carolina following his retirement in 1993. He brought together his two passions, religion and politics, while retaining a pastor's heart.

The Reverend Doctor Roger Alden Kvam
 February 22, 1931 – September 28, 2019



The Doorway

*“Behold, I stand at the door and am knocking;
if anyone hear my voice and open the door, I will come in
unto him and sup with him, and he with me.”*

(Revelation 3:20 KJV)

*Sabbath:
the imperative
of rest, the recovery
of lost focus,
a corrective to our
worship practices,
the need for
a more vital
corporate life.*

The doorway in this text, often used when inviting people to the life of faith in Jesus Christ, suggests entry points into the need for Sabbath: the imperative of rest, the recovery of lost focus, a corrective to our worship practices, the need for a more vital corporate life.

To foster a deeper sense of Sabbath/Sunday observance, the LDA has begun to encourage the formation of Covenant Groups: people who gather to consider the importance of the Lord’s Day in their lives. This issue of *eSunday Magazine* suggests three ways this might be done (as expressed more fully on the [LDA website](#)): Arts-Based groups, Bible Study groups, and ‘Great Books’ groups. And so the first article, “Thriving Through Sabbath/Sunday Covenant Groups,” highlights the theological and spiritual value of celebrating the Lord’s Day for healthy churches. Following articles offer ideas for structuring these groups and moving forward in the life of faith.

Lauri Przybysz notes the rich history of Roman Catholic worship in “Catholic Awareness of the Importance of Sunday Observance.” She cites the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (no. 453), “Celebrating the Sunday Eucharist—though central and essential—does not complete our observance of Sunday. In addition to attending Mass each Sunday, Catholics should also refrain “from those activities which impede the worship of God and disturb the joy proper to the day of the Lord or the necessary relaxation of mind and body.” This echoes John Paul II’s fresh emphasis on the Lord’s Day in *Dies Domini* (1998) and Pope Francis’ encyclical letter, *Laudato Si* (2015).

In “Sunday Is....,” Martin Marty argues that for all its positive values, now being so “creatively reimagined,” Sunday (or Shabbat, or Friday prayers) is about “lives transformed, vistas opened, and hearts inspired to serve others in their Monday and on.”



LDA President John Hinkle’s *Reflections* points out how Sunday School offers everyday saints a meaningful entry point into Sunday worship. Gail Ramshaw’s book, *Saints on Sunday* (2018) as reviewed by Larry Golemon shows us a variety of saints whose lives and virtues point us ever more clearly towards the moral depths of Sabbath/Sunday observance. Biblical warrant for this practice in Hebrew and Christian Scriptures appears in Lenore Tucker’s and Donna La Rue’s Bible Study.

Rodney L. Petersen
Executive Director of the Lord’s Day Alliance



Reflections

Sabbath was meant to be done together

by **John Hinkle**

In the summer of 1993, my new wife Leila and I returned to the Columbia Theological Seminary campus for my last year of study. Married the year before, we had decided to spend our first year together in an internship at First Presbyterian Church in Covington, Georgia. A great experience for both of us, it opened our eyes to the reality of ministry. But once done, I was ready to return to campus, finish my coursework, and prepare for my upcoming ordination. Leila hoped to connect with a local Decatur church, so we attended Clairmont Presbyterian Church, in whose Family Life Center I had worked during my first two years in seminary.

When Leila does something, she does it 100%. To me, joining Clairmont would simply give us a place to worship for the year. Not so for Leila. The first Sunday there, she found a Young Adult Sunday School class, and she made it clear she would not attend Sunday School alone. So, almost every Sunday morning, we got up and went to Sunday School class before worship.

I was not fully on board with going to Sunday School. I figured I would be working with Sunday School classes for the rest of my ministry. How would it hurt if we took a year off from Sunday School? When I said, "Sunday School" I even used air quotations. But I also recalled the saying, "Happy wife... happy life."

So I went to Sunday School.

The class was very inviting. This was not a self-focused group of people: they were clearly excited we were connecting with them, and everyone seemed accountable to everyone else. Right before class ended, we would go around the circle, saying whether we were going to be in church the next week—and if not, why not.

A strange thing happened: over time, I found I wanted to be with these people. This was not just a Sunday

School class. The first Sunday of each month, we shared a meal. We rarely went out to lunch, but we would have potluck at one of the members' homes. I went kicking and screaming the first time I accompanied Leila to one of these meals. Driving over, I kept pointing out how I could use the time for studying. After all, I did go to Sunday School with her. What more did she want from me?

You know the answer...

We experienced more than just a time of food and fellowship: there was a commitment to connect more deeply and to bond with each other, especially through prayer. We soon built a relationship with these people.

Of course, what Leila and I were experiencing was a Covenant Group. We were connecting to a group of people, committing ourselves to practice Sabbath discipline together as we followed Jesus into the world.

When I graduated from Columbia, I was called to the Presbyterian Church in Antioch, North Carolina. Our Sunday School friends threw us a going-away party for us just before we moved. When the night was over, going back to our apartment, I cried. Sabbath was meant to be done together.

That was the lesson I learned from a simple Sunday School class. ■



Rev. Dr. John Hinkle, (M.Div., Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA), pastors the First Presbyterian Church of Murfreesboro, TN, and is an at-large member of the national Presbyterian Mission Board with a brief in Finance. He is also LDA Board President, a position he has held since 2016.

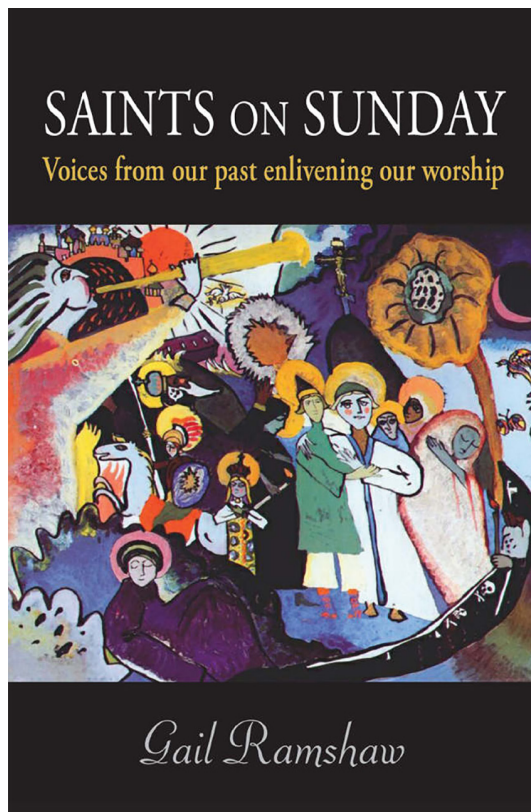
Book Review: | **Saints on Sunday:
Voices from our past enlivening our worship**
by **Larry Golemon**

I love the history, practices, and liturgies of the Church. Gail Ramshaw's book indulges all three as she paints lively, engaging portraits of major Christian figures who have contributed to the life and liturgy of the Church. Only a scholar with her deep knowledge of the lives of saints, their theology, and the implications for worship life could offer such rich, relevant guidance for the practice of Sabbath in today's various Christian traditions.

Ramshaw brings past saints' virtues forward, first sketching a portrait of the saint, then focusing on their distinct gifts for worship and help for the issues the churches face today. Symeon, the Eastern church's "new theologian" (10th c.), revitalizes our adoration of the Holy Spirit. Catholic nun Catherine of Siena shows us a full devotion to and an alternative language for the Trinity. Eastern Orthodox mystic John of Damascus uplifts the verbal imagery of Scripture as well as visual icons for prayer. The Anglican-turned-Catholic Dorothy Day reminds us to pray and work for social justice.

Balanced between female and male saints from early Christianity forward, this work retrieves the contributions of men and women in the life of the Church. It draws on Mary Magdalene as the first proclaimer of Christ's resurrection and Justin the apologist (1st and 2nd c.); Perpetua the martyr and Br. Lawrence the champion of the poor (2nd and 3rd c.); Egeria the pilgrim and Ambrose the bishop (4th c.), princess Radegund the monastic and Benedict the monk (6th c.), Hildegard the doctor of the Church and St. Francis the peacemaker (12th-13th c.), Margery Kemp the bride of Christ and Martin Luther the reformer (15th-16th c.), Margaret Fell the proto-feminist (17th c.) and Philipp Nicolai (16th c.), Julian of Norwich the visionary (14th c.) and Thomas Cranmer (15th-16th c.), Catherine Wentworth the missionary and Br. Roger the ecumenical monastic (19th-20th c.).

The text offers an ecumenical lineup, including some names that many will not recognize as saints



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(like Thomas Kepler the scientist!). The ecumenical reach includes figures from Anglican, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Quaker communions. Ramshaw also draws from a variety of European and near Eastern nations. Perhaps the sequel can include more people of color and global saints, and draw on Baptists, Methodists, and Pentecostals as well?

Like the early hagiographies, made for seasonal use in worship, *Saints on Sunday* follows the liturgical *ordo*. Ramshaw opens with Assembly and with the Trinitarian adoration of God, Christ and the Spirit. She takes wrestling with the Devil and sin seriously. She emphasizes the knowledgeable reading of the Word, chanted Psalms, and preaching. Her book lifts up hymn-singing, praying with images, and reciting the creeds. She celebrates intercession, praise and thanks, offerings, and passing the peace. She stresses the movement from

the eucharist to service in the world. As in her earlier writings, Ramshaw challenges us to revisit our language for God and worship, to honor the metaphors and imagery of Scripture, and to reclaim the power of the liturgy to shape our theology. Herein lies paydirt for congregational leaders.

As a Reformed preacher, I wish Dr. Ramshaw had continued her earlier work's affirmation of a reconstructed typological Antiochene reading of the two Testaments, honoring the history-like character of Biblical narratives (including their historical-critical reconstruction), the priority of plain sense readings (with Jerome), and the canonical integrity of the whole Bible. Her emphasis on the general metaphorical nature of the Scriptures may over-mesh worship, scripture, world and culture on equal terms.

Nonetheless, this book brings the saints to life as contemporary witnesses, so it remains a remarkable contribution to daily worship, the use of the Bible, and liturgical theology. ■

Thriving Through Sabbath/Sunday Covenant Groups

by **Rodney L. Petersen**

In 1888, as the onset of the Progressive Era and the urbanization of American culture created new pressures on communal time, six mainstream churches formed a group to support Sabbath-keeping, called the *American Sabbath Union* (ASU). Established just 23 years after the Civil War, they also offered a path to reconciliation among Northern and Southern churches split over the war's issues. Various wings of the church began working to promote a greater corporate expression of Christian faith in worship, encouraging the presence of a body of believers alive to the liturgical moment. (Walter Rauschenbusch's social gospel (1917), Dwight L. Moody's pietistic preaching (1899), and the studies that led up to Vatican II (1963) all shaped these impulses.) The ASU's constitution said:

"The basis of the American Sabbath Union is the Divine authority and universal and perpetual obligation of the Sabbath as manifested in the order and constitution of nature, declared in the revealed will of God, formulated in the Fourth Commandment of the Moral Law, interpreted and applied by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, transferred to the Christian Sabbath, or Lord's Day, by Christ and His Apostles, and approved by the beneficent influence upon personal and rational life."

In 1909, further affirming this corporate dimension the ASU renamed itself, 'The Lord's Day Alliance of the United States' (LDA). The organization then proposed a series of "Blue Laws," legal restrictions on commercial Sunday practices, to prevent the profanation of the Christian Sabbath and protect corporate worship from governmental, business, and recreational distractions. These legislative efforts saw mixed success; the group returned to a more exhortative model, pointing out the significant truths of Sabbath/Sunday observance.



National reconciliation is needed today as certainly as it was then.

Early Christian spiritual formation focused on the significance of Jesus's resurrection for faith and life; worship was organized around what was called the Lord's Day as the day of Resurrection. Early believers assembled for worship and weekly almsgiving (1 Cor 16:1-2), providing continuity with Judaism's emphasis on the deep inner connection between worship and ethics (Is 58:6-14; Mk 2:23-28; Stassen, 2013). Gathered believers who shared intentional prayer and care of the poor (1 Cor 16:1-2) thus obeyed the mandate of the two tables of the law: love of God, and love of neighbor (Matt 22:37-40). (O'Flaherty, 2010).

Later monastic congregations' and local parishes' rhythmic Sabbath/Sunday observances structured the life of prayer and manual work through the week—not as an end in itself, but in aid of the moral journey. This created an arena in which to proclaim the *credo*, grow in spiritual vision and character formation, and define a narrative of renewal for working out life's inevitable conflicts amidst the recurring challenges of engagement with others.

Recent Lily Endowment findings (Lily, 2018, p. 3) show that clergy also face such challenges in their ministry, especially in their first years of practice, as they address congregational issues and manage career transitions beneath the public gaze. Pastoral counselors and psychologists state that contemplative practice and communal worship contribute to a healthy public life. (Proeschold-Bell and Byassee, 2018). Quaker Richard Foster's book *Celebration of Discipline* (1978) also recovers older insights of moral theology, upholding inward disciplines like prayer, fasting, meditation, and Bible study; and the outward disciplines of simplicity, solitude, submission and service within contemporary psychological sensitivities. In the last 40 years, more attention has been given to new clergy's needs for private, supportive wellsprings of spiritual growth. Grounding such practices in weekly rhythms of covenant renewal and Sabbath/Sunday observance can help shape clerical character.

If affirming a firmly established recuperative prayer is good for clergy, it also offers healing for laity facing similar challenges. The growing popularity of spiritual practices facilitated by the Center for Action and Contemplation, described in *How We Gather*, (Thurston, et al., 2017), Rohr's *Essential Teachings on Love* (2018), and Tippett's *On Being* (2017) likewise attest to contemporary spiritual hunger, as do Rast (2010) and Haidt (2013). The temporal rhythm of rituals experienced in community encourage what Rev. Eugene Peterson called *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* (1993). Attention to spiritual psychology in an intentionally holistic interactive context, facilitates the formation of a culture of life.

The LDA has long sought to build up a thriving lay and clerical ministry, anchored in Jesus Christ—most recently, now, by promoting the formation of Sabbath/ Sunday Covenant Groups. Grounded in mentoring relationships (Bloom, 2017) and spiritual formation over a few meetings, these offer opportunities for online discussion, journaling,

Investing time
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whatever their
professional vocation.

and retreats to reflect on the meaning of *Sabbath, Sunday*, and *the Lord's Day* in ways that support ministerial and congregational life. The association of new believers with more experienced lay and clerical role models can lead to a thriving congregation, enhanced by the encouragement of regenerative Sabbath/Sunday practices. Following Scriptural injunctions and the principles of healthy Christian spiritual formation, this program can support pastoral leaders and congregational members whose participation is "more likely to promote a 'culture of involvement' that actively assimilates newcomers and fully involves members in leadership" (Marler, 2010) and encourages their living as stewards who understand *economeia* as well as 'economy,' with and upon the earth.

These gatherings help churches inculcate Sabbath/ Sunday practice; create an understanding, listening community; and help congregants and clergy avoid isolation and dislocation. Investing time to meet and reflect on worship can draw out the spiritual, pastoral, and personal aspects of Christian practice, and help twenty-first century churchgoers formulate new strategies for corporate witness, whatever their professional vocation.

Such a broadly engaged culture is a mark of strength in congregations that focus outward towards service within a more global ecclesiology, and inward towards reclaiming the practice of spiritual formation. ■



Rev. Dr. Rodney L. Petersen (Ph.D., Princeton Theological Seminary; M.Div., Harvard Divinity School, ordained PCUSA) is the LDA's Executive Director, past director of the Boston Theological Institute (BTI), and the co-founder of Boston University School of Theology's Religion and Conflict Transformation program. He has taught at the seminary level and written and facilitated workshops on restorative justice, reconciliation, interfaith just peacemaking, and community engagement.

The Sabbath/Sunday Covenant Groups Website: An Offering of the LDA Board

*Explore and experience
Sabbath rest,
encouraged
and supported
by the Lord's Day Alliance
in Sabbath/Sunday
Covenant Groups!*

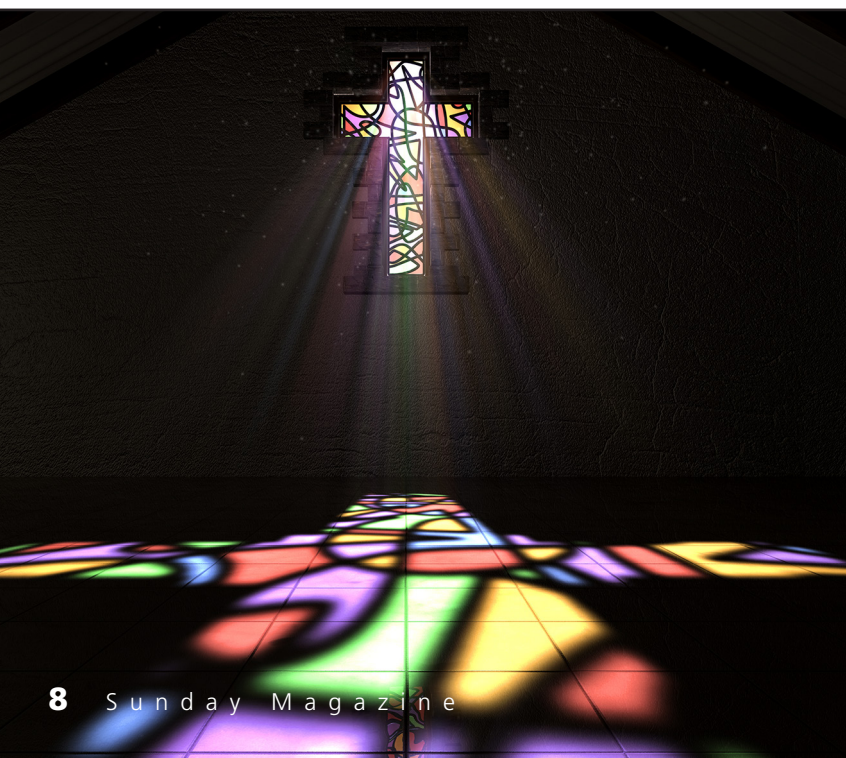
Background: The Lord's Day Alliance of the United States (LDA) is led by a Board of Managers comprised of clergy and laity from Christian churches, including, but not limited to, Baptist, Catholic, Congregational, Episcopal, Friends, Lutheran, Methodist, Non-Denominational, Orthodox, Presbyterian, and Reformed traditions. It exists to encourage all people to receive God's great gift of Sabbath rest and to encourage all Christians to worship the risen Lord Jesus Christ, on the Lord's Day—Sunday—that they may be renewed in spirit and empowered to live lives worthy of the Gospel.

Founded as The American Sabbath Union in 1888, when representatives of six major Protestant denominations met in Washington, D.C., the Lord's Day Alliance (as it was later re-named) has been the one national organization whose sole purpose is to maintain and cultivate the first day of the week as a time for rest, worship, Christian education and spiritual renewal. Today, the LDA promotes this message in the 21st century's fast-paced 24/7 culture.

New Ideas: Recently, the LDA Board has been exploring how to encourage small groups within churches, seminaries, and other settings to consider the place of Sabbath/Sunday observance in the life of faith. We have begun crafting various approaches for individuals and groups to come together and explore these issues. Such discussions lend focus to Christian formation, as group members consider what is important to them about Sabbath/Sunday observance in their own life of prayer and worship. Small groups encourage people to ponder more deeply how they use time personally and communally, and how to dedicate their time-bound activities to God. Group formation can happen in many ways.

LDA board members have developed three possible forms for those interested in this experiment to consider. These are suggestions only: you may wish to try each at a different time, blend them, or invent your own structures based on the people you will be working with and the ways you know they are used to working. We considered three paths towards exploration in this area: *Arts-based Activities*, *Bible Studies* (in two different formats) and *Book Discussion Groups*.

Your Input Welcome! As we seek to develop this program, we are also interested in the input of those who experiment with its offerings. We solicit feedback and participatory input to its growth. Instructions for those new to leading a Bible Study or Covenant Group are available on the LDA website (www.ldausa.org), or email us at: info@ldausa.org.



A Summary of Potential Offerings:



Arts-Based Groups: This structure can bring together those who want to explore Sabbath principles and practices by using the arts in their discussions and expressions of experience. It suggests how to set up groups with a fair degree of flexibility in most dimensions. A variety of historical works from many places and times can be considered.

By suggesting basic elements, but not giving exact protocols, the structure of the group and its use of particular media can be open-ended, depending on the skills and materials available, and the ways in which the group wishes to learn about and apply them.



Bible Study Groups: This offering is subdivided into two separate series. A group may study connections among the Ten Commandments and the central significance of Sabbath/Sunday observance (Commandment 3 or 4 in various traditions). Based on Barth's understanding of the Sabbath commandment as the Decalogue's chiasmic center, this in-depth work will interest those seeking a more complex, informed Bible Study.

Or the group may follow Sunday themes with a focus on Bible Study techniques, including the use of a Concordance, how to do word studies, and the comparison and contrast of concepts.



'Great Books' Groups: This structure is for those interested in a small group that will study books centered on Sabbath/Sunday thinking and practice.

The purpose of this study group is to expand the number of individuals who have a greater knowledge of the Biblical concepts of the gift of the Sabbath and to affirm a corporate and personal commitment to the benefits of regular practice of Sabbath/Sunday observance in their contemporary lives. A bibliography listing potential books for study is found online (**see the Resources tab**), along with suggestions for group organization.

To Contact and/or Work With the LDA:

1. Consider your group's needs in light of your community's strengths and challenges, and your present Sabbath practices.
2. Formulate a proposal detailing what your group wants to see happen in a set period of time, and how the LDA can help.
3. Contact the LDA! The Executive Director can refer you to the Board Member(s) best able to work with you in the ways you are seeking.

Phone: 404.693.5530 ~ Email: info@ldausa.org ~ Twitter: [@LordsDayAllian1](https://twitter.com/LordsDayAllian1) ~ Website: www.ldausa.org

Small group book studies can foster Sabbath/Sunday thinking and practice by expanding the number of people in a congregation or a community who have considered the importance of these concepts, and who understand Biblical ideas like the *gift of the Sabbath*. Book studies affirm a personal and corporate commitment to the benefits of regular Sabbath/Sunday observance, however they may be experienced in each member's daily life.

If you've never organized a small group, see the guidelines on the LDA website. These steps may also help:

Defining the Group: This project could grow out of a Sunday School or Bible Study group, an existing book study group, a lunch or dinner group, a neighborhood group, or part of a book club or library study group. Many such groups exist in local communities. If a group is not available, assemble one, starting with an invitation for dessert and conversation (since people like food)!

Group Organization: There are many ways to organize a group. A leader may select a book to be studied, chapter by chapter, over a specified time period. Individual members could be asked to lead a discussion on designated chapters. More than one book could be chosen, with different group members reporting on topics covered in their particular book under a specific theme for each meeting.

Whatever approach is taken, all participants should be strongly encouraged to read the materials assigned for discussion. Leaders should resist the temptation to turn gatherings into lecture sessions. Care must be taken to allow all to express their opinions and share their experiences without dominating the group and devaluing didactic learning. If the group is newly formed, the members may need to establish and agree on "rules of engagement."

Desired Outcomes: Guaranteeing and measuring outcomes in study groups can be difficult.

Objectives should include:

- a) a more complete understanding of the origin and history of the practice of Sabbath/Sunday,
- b) personal reflection and evaluation of the practice of Sabbath time,
- c) a clearer understanding of the benefits of Sabbath practice,



Book Study Groups:

One Way to Structure A Covenant Group

- d) an exploration of the challenges of Sabbath/Sunday practice in contemporary culture, and
- e) participants' desired or appropriate behavior changes (making time for rest, attendance at worship or prayer meetings, scheduling family time away from weekly tasks, etc.).

The LDA mission may be a useful starting place for these discussions. As found in the masthead on the *Table of Contents* page of this issue, and on the website, it articulates in brief form a vision for this type of spiritual growth. Churches, faith organizations, Bible study and prayer groups may thus come to value the use of this method of study as the group and its members move forward in the life of faith.

Books: There are many appropriate books to consider. Below are a few possibilities. Others will appear in the bibliography at the end of this magazine, and in the LDA website's comprehensive bibliography.

Brueggemann, W., *Sabbath as Resistance: Saying No to the Culture of Now* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014) (Study Guide) 2017.

Dawn, M. J., *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Fasting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989).

Fishbane, M., *Sacred Attunement: A Jewish Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

Heschel, A., *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1951).

Muller, W., *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives* (New York: Bantam Books, 1999).

O'Flaherty, E., and Petersen, R.L., eds., with Norton, T. A. *Sunday, Sabbath, and the Weekend: Managing Time in a Global Culture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2010).



Active in community service and in the educational and institutional life of regional schools and churches, LDA Board Member Dr. M. Austin Connors (B.A. Furman Univ., M.S.Ed., Ed.D. Indiana Univ.) has volunteered

as a guardian ad litem advocate since 2006. He has administered, worked with, and taught individuals at all educational levels, and served on local and national boards for child welfare and other justice-related activities.

by **Rodney Petersen, Lenore Tucker and Donna La Rue**

This offering is subdivided into two series, one complex, the other simpler. Each has individual pages with identifying headers to print out and share with group members. Group leaders can follow the page as a basis for questions and class conversation.

1. The **first** looks at connections among the Ten Commandments and the centrality of Sabbath/Sunday observance (Commandment 3 or 4 in various traditions).

2. The **second** uses this magazine's past themes, Bible Study techniques, and other tools (Concordances, word studies, and comparing and contrasting ideas) to help class members grow in understanding Scripture.

For groups already experienced in reading and discussing Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, the first offering will be most satisfying. If a group is just beginning in this work, the second group of classes is recommended. Both online course listings end with links to printouts for class use.

1. Advanced Scripture Study: Hebrew Scriptures Focusing on Community Building and Social Justice Concerns in the Decalogue
(Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15).

The Ten Commandments (Decalogue) are more than orders to be followed: they are a restorative gift to any group of individuals seeking a common life. By the time of the Exodus, Jewish religious and social structures had broken down, bringing insecurity, disaffection, and violence. God's Commandments held all that was essential for them to heal their fractured society and restructure its ruptured cultural ties.

God's abundant gifts answer all our needs. Ray Helmick sees this in God's promise to Joshua, "Fear not, for I am with you" (Helmick, 2014). God is ever-present to all who call on God for help. God's covenant with humanity remains efficacious and irrevocable. The value of the Sabbath as "covenant renewal" for the well-being of civil society remains unbroken in Jesus' teachings from their context in the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible). Jesus' understanding of Sabbath is grounded in Jewish practice. In Sabbath/



Bible Study Groups:

Two Offerings for Experienced and Beginning Bible Students

Sunday observance we find a host of concerns for social justice. Karl Barth adds an ethical rationale to this central role of the Sabbath holding that:

"...the Sabbath commandment explains all the other commandments, or all the other forms of the one commandment. It is thus to be placed at the head." (Barth, 1954)

Barth's sense of internal coherence within the Decalogue thus sets the Sabbath commandment at its chiasmic center. This Bible Study focuses on his interpretation, examined from several different perspectives.

The program is descriptive, not prescriptive. Its open lesson plans let lead-

ers innovate and fill out the work with ties between Sabbath/Sunday observance and social behaviors that can be community. The study may be useful for groups meeting weekly, monthly, or in some other pattern. They are given both as individual.pdf's, to be printed separately, and in a single file of all six lessons, plus the overview, to be printed together.

2. Beginning Study: Sunday/Sabbath Themes Drawn from eSunday Magazine

These Bible Studies were written in conjunction with themes for each of the LDA's semiannual **eSunday Magazine**. Each page has four study topics for weekly or monthly offerings. They offer a Scripture study learning sequence that builds in complexity. Lessons 1 and 2 give basic setup and structures: the first gives ideas for class planning, using several articles in opening discussions; the second takes a book reviewed in that issue and builds around it.

In lessons 3 and 4, separate questions and topics are considered: they take terms explored in their respective issues, pressing them out further with appropriate Scripture references for more study. In Lessons 5 and 6, greater familiarity with the use of concordances is presumed; taking the work a step further, they compare and contrast terms from specific articles with the magazine's larger ideas and follow historical periods into which Scripture study is also sometimes divided.

Lessons 7 and 8 include these approaches, offering single scriptures for more intense discussion, and encouraging class members to bring up their own citations for comparison. All lessons encourage the use of translations from the original Scriptural languages, and the use of ones' own denominational commentaries. As classes grow more complex and interesting, they also require more advance preparation, fostering greater growth in thinking about and wrestling with Scriptural topics on the topics to be considered. *(Developed by Lenore Tucker, Donna La Rue)*

To explore Sabbath principles and practices, try bringing people together and involving the arts in multivalent discussions and experiential expression. This page suggests ways to explore topics like rest, *focus*, *regeneration*, *prayer*, and *release* on their own terms. Structural formats may be combined or stand alone.

By suggesting basic elements, but not defining protocols, a group's structure and its use of media can be open-ended. A teacher or arts practitioner with particular skills or training may make a presentation for one session, or they might build a group program around their work (perhaps sketching small still-life table arrangements, visiting a gallery to meditate on specific pieces with a journal, sketch pad, or music to listen to, etc.).

A standing arts group within a congregation, school, library or recreation center might provide the nucleus for this type of group; if a studio, or art materials, are available nearby, someone with background in their use might be a good choice for a leader, or co-leader (one to present ideas and spark discussions, the other to assist with the production of art works associated with the topics under study).

Still another option is the use of PowerPoint presentations that offer art historical reflections on various topics (two are appended [here](#): each could serve to anchor a session:). The first could also be used in a Bible Study.

1. Three of John Biggers' silvery pencil sketches are the focus of a study of the 23rd Psalm ([link here](#)). The interleaving of text and visual materials offers an entry point into a meditative discussion around rest, peace and safety; (Credit: Lenore Tucker, LDA Board Member and Donna La Rue, LDA Staff).

2. Examples of drumming and comparisons ([link here](#)) between various drumming practices, the use of rhythm in worship, and the need for rhythmic attention to rest as well as action in the life of faith are developed as a springboard for further work. (Credit: Hector Pagan, LDA Board Member).



Art-Based Groups:

Scripture Study and the Arts

Group Formation

- Where: Site, Space, Locale? Dance needs a large area with wooden floors, films require a screen and projector; music needs a space with good audio equipment. (Watch *Ailey's Revelations*; listen to Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, set a dance to the Beatitudes. What does each say of rest?)
- How Called Together (Meetups, Church Announcements, Art-interest groups)?
- Meeting Frequency (Weekly, Bimonthly, Monthly, Quarterly, Other)?
- Meeting Types (Attendance at Museums/Concerts, in Alternation w/ Discussion)?
- Age, Other Qualifying Ranges to be Focused On? (Multi-generational, Specific Groups)?

- Costs, Affordability (Support for Attendance, Entry Fees, Tea/Coffee/Cocoa at a Café)?
- Organization Team (Leader, Food, Contact for Museum/Concert trips)?

Group Focus

- One Art Form or Many (Groups for each kind, Rotating types/art, other)?
- Discussion Formats (Verbal conversation, Visual/drawing responses, etc.)?
- Leadership (Recall focus, keep discussion on-topic, be in touch with absentees)?

Options for Group Activities

- In-House Meetings (Occasional speaker, artist, slide lecture, play video, music CD?)
- Off-site Gatherings (Concert Halls, Galleries, Dance Performance Sites, Theaters)?
- Other (Restaurants, Cafés/Coffee Shops, Homes, Art/Music/Dance Schools)?

Fundamental Principles of Group Organization and Conversation

- Guidelines for Conversation (Kind, Attentive to Others, Focused)
- Regular Attendance (Set schedule, stick with it, accountable to leader/email absences)
- Journaling (Diary, Sketchbook, Record Own Comments/Audacity)

Art-focused groups may be more interested in hands-on activities set up to invite deeper discussion; on simpler participatory work that represents something about Sabbath/Sunday observance but is easier to make; or on receptive attendance at films or slide lectures on specific topics in the arts, music, dance theater or visual works.

You may have people skilled in such types of work within your congregation. Or you may invite contributors to focus discussion, create pertinent activities, and challenge group members to work beyond their "comfort zone." Sub-groups may form around various topics and types of art activity, whether in-house studio work, or external visits to a film, museum, or performance. (Contact the LDA at info@ldausa.org to reach resource people, too!)

by **Dr. Lauri Przybysz**

Catholic Awareness of the Importance of Sunday Observance

From time to time,
we invite individuals
to discuss their confessions'
Sunday/Sabbath observances.



The primary way in which Catholics celebrate the Lord's Day is with participation in the Sunday Eucharist. This is so central, that the Catholic Church in some places makes provision for Catholics to fulfill their Sunday Mass obligation by attending the Liturgy on Saturday evening. Private prayer, though essential to the spiritual life, can never replace the celebration of the eucharistic Liturgy and the reception of Holy Communion.

In some communities, the lack of priests makes it impossible to celebrate the Eucharist each Sunday. In such instances, the bishop may make provision for these parish communities to gather and celebrate the Liturgy of the Word or the Liturgy of the Hours. These Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest may or may not include the reception of Holy Communion. Still, these celebrations allow the People of God to gather and keep holy the Lord's Day.

Celebrating the Sunday Eucharist—though central and essential—does not complete our observance of Sunday. In addition to attending Mass each Sunday, Catholics should also refrain “from those activities which impede the worship of God and disturb the joy proper to the day of the Lord or the necessary relaxation of mind and body” (Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 453).

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Sunday observance is defined and promoted as integral to “Life in Christ, in fulfillment of the Third Commandment, requiring communal worship (particularly the Eucharist) and “a day of grace and rest from work.” For this teaching, the Catechism appeals to the authority of Scripture and writings of the Fathers of the Church and the saints. According to the Catechism, “Christians will also sanctify Sunday by devoting time and care to their families and relatives, often difficult to do on other days of the week. Sunday is a time for reflection, silence, cultivation of the mind, and meditation which furthers the growth of the Christian interior life” (CCC, Part III.2.1.3).

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, from the Second Vatican Council (1965) confirms that the institution of Sunday helps all “to be allowed sufficient rest and leisure to cultivate their familial, cultural, social, and religious lives” (GS 67 § 3).

St. John Paul II's 1998 apostolic letter on the Lord's Day, *Dies Domini*, reaffirms the foundation for understanding the meaning of Sunday for Christians. He explains at length the special need for the regular communal worship of the Church on Sunday through meditating on the mystery of Communion and of the mystical body of Christ.

John Paul II appealed to Catholic clergy and laity to recover the meaning of Sunday as the Lord's Day: “Do not be afraid to give your time to Christ. Yes, let us open

In our time, Sunday has slowly lost its pride of place

our time to Christ, that he may cast light upon it and give it direction. He is the One who knows the secret of time and the secret of eternity, and he gives us “his day” as an ever-new gift of his love. The rediscovery of this day is a grace which we must implore, not only so that we may live the demands of faith to the full, but also so that we may respond concretely to the deepest human yearnings. Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is rather time gained, so that our relationships and indeed our whole life may become more profoundly human” (no. 7).

In his preaching, Pope Francis has emphasized the importance of Sunday worship, “Mass on Sundays is particularly important because it is the day of the resurrection of the Lord, and with the Eucharist we feel our own belonging to the church, to the people of God, to the body of God, to Jesus Christ.” (General audience, St. Peter’s Square, 5 Feb 2014). He said recently that Sunday is the day of thanksgiving for the gift of life, and that observing God’s rest on the seventh day is related to “looking joyfully at reality,” and is the model for Sunday rest. A recording of this short address is [he re](#).

Catholic leaders are making efforts to recover and improve Sunday observance. For example, Archbishop of Detroit’s Allen Henry Vigneron issued the letter, “[The Day of the Lord](#)”, after the 2016 Synod consultations with clergy and laity. He urged that parishioners reclaim Sunday as a day set apart for the Lord, for family and for works of mercy: “In our time, Sunday has slowly lost its pride of place. In the Archdiocese of Detroit, we are committed to setting aside this day as much as possible for God-centered pursuits.” The archbishop promised that the archdiocese would offer a number of resources to assist families in their own practice of keeping holy the Lord’s Day.

To highlight his commitment to restoring Sunday for family time, Archbishop Vigneron directed Catholic youth sports would no longer be scheduled on Sunday in Detroit: “After prayerful consultation with the presbyterate of Detroit and responding to what I believe is the call of the Holy Spirit through Synod 16, we in the Archdiocese of Detroit will cease sporting events on Sunday. This means that competitive athletic programs in the grade school and high school levels are called to no longer play games or conduct practices on the Lord’s Day.”

A review of the Archdiocese of Detroit’s Catholic youth sports schedule confirms that the archdiocese has indeed followed through on this commitment, with no games or practices scheduled on Sundays. The Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana, also does not schedule sports on Sundays. A recent survey of family life offices in the U.S. did not identify any other U.S. dioceses with no-sports-on-Sunday policies. However, an effort seems to be made to schedule sports

activities after 12 noon in order to give young athletes and their families the opportunity to worship on Sunday morning.

The first Vatican document on sports takes a more lenient approach to Sunday sports. The 2018 document from the Dicastery for Family, Laity and Life, “[Giving the Best of Yourself](#),” condoned sports on Sundays as a means of bringing families and communities together in joy and celebration, but only as long as such events are not used as an excuse to miss Mass.

In *The Day of the Lord*, Archbishop Vigneron provides a good summary the Catholic approach to Sunday observance:

“Keeping holy Sunday also reminds us of our eternal destiny; it allows us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. We put aside the worldly pursuits which are necessary for this life but too often become a distraction from what is ultimately important: “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides.” Sunday is a day to rest from work so that we have the time and leisure to pursue things that do not have worldly utility. Unless we take this regular time away from these matters, we will easily and quickly lose sight of our ultimate destiny. Our attention needs to be intentionally interrupted from our earthly work to call to mind the reality that we are joint heirs with Christ of the things of heaven.”

In the short flyer, [Celebrating the Lord’s Day](#), the U.S. Catholic Bishops recommend these practices for celebrating the Lord’s Day—in addition to Mass attendance:

- Don’t use Sunday as your catch-all day for errands and household chores.
- Share a family dinner after Mass. Have the whole family join in the preparation and cleanup.
- Go for a walk or bike ride and give thanks to God for the beauty of nature.
- Spend time reading the Bible or a spiritual book.
- Pray the Rosary or the Liturgy of the Hours, alone or with others.
- Volunteer in a local food pantry.
- Visit parishioners and others who are homebound.
- Read Bible stories to your children.
- Turn off your gadgets and enjoy the silence. ■



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by **Martin E. Marty**

Sunday is...

Are traditional holy days
still something more
than just
any other day?

The LDA is grateful for permission to reprint this article from the University of Chicago's Divinity School online journal, *Sightings*

"Sunday Is Not the New Monday" shouted the headline of the "Success" section in a recent edition of our *Chicago Tribune* (Monday, December 30, 2019). Having many reasons—cultural, theological, traditional, personal, etc.—to care about Sunday (or analogues to it in Judaism, Adventism, Islam, and more) I took the bait and read on. Author John Boitnott opens the article with a description of what Sunday used to mean—or what he thinks it used to mean—and how it served: "Sunday used to be for relaxing, spending time with family and friends and catching up on personal tasks." Boitnott says that he associates with "entrepreneurs" and authors of advice columns who encourage their readers to "stay available for work outside traditional business hours."

Boitnott offers four clusters of advice in settings where "work" casts its shadow on Sundays: "Stop the guilt," "Remove yourself from the work environment," "Set limits and retrain those around you," and "Plan for Monday on Friday." So far, so good, if "workism" or "workaholism" is your problem. But is that all that is at stake and all that is to be offered to face the problem? We *Sightings* columnists are charged to notice those overlookable stories wherein religion or the religious may in fact be significant. Reread the Boitnott sentence again, the one about how

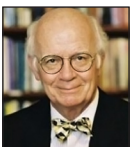


"Sunday used to be for relaxing, spending time with family and friends and catching up on personal tasks." Yes, but for tens of millions of North Americans, among others, Sundays (for Christians; Fridays for Muslims; Shabbat for Jews; etc.) were also for helping people tend to general and specific matters of the spirit and the soulful flourishing of life.

Stop! Hold it, M.E.M.! Two hazards face us. First, we are not to be given to nostalgia and to fancying ideal past occasions that never prevailed in times that "used to be." Second, the cultural features of the historic uses of Sunday are not vivid or available to, again, "tens of millions." Let me toss in a third note: if we are implying that a valid use of Sunday was or is for assembly and worship, we may be buying trouble in a pluralistic society. There, "matters of the spirit" can easily become subject to sectarian and particularistic resorts to banal, exploitative, and many impoverishing "uses of Sunday." Boitnott's points of advice may not address all that is needed, but, as far as they go, they may very well serve up benefits to readers and the public at large.

His article fired my curiosity about how widespread his absence-of-the-spiritual writing in this case is, and it inspired me to investigate whether or not other writers think Sunday is something other than the "new Monday." Do others also overlook what we are calling the "spiritual" or "religious" dimensions of Sunday-as-the-new-Monday? Yes, and yes, indeed. We checked with Google, who helped us turn up scores of "Sunday is..." columns that echoed Boitnott's. For most of them, the positive values of what Sunday did or was designed to do are also overlooked and rarely considered as even an option. Yet, there are today many places where Sunday (and Friday and Saturday) is still a moment of meaning and renewal for the spiritual lives and imaginaries of religiously inclined people, and what Sunday "is" and "means" is being creatively reimagined in every corner of our world for such religious purposes.

I, along with colleagues of mine, have documented throughout my career the ever-expanding and ever-changing nature of Sunday (Friday, Shabbat, etc.) "worship" or "observance," whether "traditional" or "contemporary," aesthetically rich or just artistically passable, crowded or sparsely attended, "high" and refined or "low" and populist worship cultures, countless people serve and are being served. What we'd like to see from advice-givers like Mr. Boitnott are observations about what our contemporaries find at Sunday (etc.) worship that may help them experience lives transformed, vistas opened, and hearts inspired to serve others in their Monday and on worlds. ■



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Poem

by **Alexander Kern**

Christmas Eve Hike

New boots treading over clouds of snow
with New Year's whispering in my ear,
evergreen among the brown
fluttering like a phosphorous veil
floating on the roof of the sea.
For the gift of day, for this I give thanks
and for the faces of strangers
made beautiful by snow.
For my thick tongue wagging
at the scent of the spirit,
for the thirst that's quenched
by the sign of the lake,
for the sign that reminds me
"No Parking Past Dark,"
for the face of my child,
and yes even this:
the startling way that mercy descends
in the breath of a dog wagging his tail
on the frozen trail up ahead.



As an interfaith leader, poet, and educator, Quaker **Alexander Levering Kern** is also Executive Director of Northeastern University's Center for Spirituality, Dialogue and Service. Alex's works

include *Becoming Fire: Spiritual Writing from Rising Generations*, an edited anthology, and publications in *Spiritus*, *African American Review*; *Huffington Post*; and *the Journal of the American Medical Association*.

LDA RESOURCE PAGES

Bible Study: Judicious Use of the Power of Small Groups: A Bible Study for Covenant Groups

This issue promotes the use of small groups to study Sabbath/Sunday observance, A Scripture study on the nature of groups surfaces strong endorsements of this idea for faith formation—as well as some interesting exceptions. We again look at two periods within Hebrew Scriptures and two within Christian Scriptures, covering a variety of books and avoiding the tendency to focus on a few well-known passages while ignoring others. We offer topics for four months' weekly work; you can also follow other rhythms. The four subdivided topics within the larger headings are more topical than chronological this time, to develop a (* starred) theme within each given historical period. Several points are extensive enough to support further work, or allow for more emphasis, beyond the verses cited, especially if studied with the articles, book reviews, and citations elsewhere in this magazine. (See the Bibliography for more).

Unlike some of our earlier studies, this one refers only to the *first* instance of an idea or term (look up

these underlined words in the Concordance for more background). As usual, you will want Bibles, at least one Concordance, an English Dictionary, a timeline, and other reference materials so class members can look up information and confirm understanding or agreement with the given passages. The observations after each topic are not 'last words on small group formation? They pose debate questions. Disagreements welcome!

The study verses, then, examine **a)** How groups can or do work, generally, and **b)** How various groups addressed the Third/Fourth Commandment re: Sabbath/Sunday observance, and **c)** what resources in ideas or practice those findings offer us in the present. **Note:** Section **2d** explores a section of the Bible called the *Apocrypha*. Some Bibles (and some churches) include it in the canon, others do not. If it's not among your tradition's received texts, or unavailable in your editions, use this week to review the seven earlier lessons.

1. From Genesis to the First Temple: Kinship Groups form, break apart, and re-form.

How can/do such groups function for good?

- a. Cohesion and Consternation Among Adam and Eve, Cain and Able: A *family group's* interactions with God and each other
Gen 1-5 Adam, naming God's creatures; celebrates variety, but his offspring turn to envy and murder over their differences.
 - b. Noah, the Ark's Animals and the Tower of Babel: Types of *Group Cooperation* Among Members of God's Material Creation
Gen 6-12 (The assemblage of those saved on the Ark formed an enclosed *group*; the Tower of Babel reflects *group pride*).
 - c. Ten or Eleven vs. One or Two: How Group Process Among Joseph's Brothers Led to Evil (and how God turned it to good)
Gen 30:24-50 Over a long life, Joseph saw greed, and conspiracy. What other cultures did he live in? What did he learn?
 - d. Small Group Formation in Opposition to Leadership: Moses' Experience of Rebellion by Internal Leaders During the Exodus
Gen 14:13, Hebrews /*Hebrew children* = Jacob's descendants = 'God's people.' In Num 16, groups form within that group.
- * **Small groups may strengthen or weaken an originating group. How do groups grow in a good way? What choices are best?**

2. Arrival in Canaan to the Babylonian Exile and Second Temple: Growth of Small and Large Groups within the Hebrew Population

- a. Priests, Prophets, Judges and Nazarites: Jewish institutions and para-institutional support structures for worship and justice
Lev 8: God *sanctifies* the Levites; Num 11:26 Prophets speak truth, Judges uphold Law; Nazarites enact discipline (Jdgs.).
- b. Amorites, Philistines, Moabites, and Other Cultures Surround, Absorb or Are Absorbed by Israel As It Returns from Egypt
Deut 39; Josh 1: A place, a name and rules to live by establish identity. But see: Josh 10-13 (Amorites, Philistines, Moabites).

LDA RESOURCE PAGES

Bible Study: Judicious Use of the Power of Small Groups:

A Bible Study for Covenant Groups (continued from previous page)

- c. The Cults of Baal, Moloch, and other idols: In opposition to given rules (Decalogue) and mores, small groups can be seductive.
The Canaanite god Baal (Num 22-25), and the infant-devouring Moloch (Lev 18-20) drew adherents to their dramatic cults.
 - d. From Wild Abandon to Rigid Post-exilic Orthodoxy: Reaction formations among Maccabees, Pharisees, and Sadducees: The Maccabean family (Mac I -IV) and Temple parties opposed (Pharisee) or sought (Sadducee) Greek influences after 166 BCE.
 - * **How did faithful, believing sub-groups keep Judaism alive despite corruption, war, and exile? What is a *saving remnant*?**
-

3. From the Birth of Jesus to the Acts of the Apostles: A Venn diagram of small groups and their interactions during Jesus' ministry

- a. The Three Kings and Shepherds as Clusters of Supportive Worshipers: Traveling and working together while listening to God
Mt 2 and Lk 2 show two groups of worshippers who moved out of old, known contexts to a new, unknown potential in God.
 - b. Calling 12 Disciples, Sending out 72 Missionaries in Dyads (two by two): Larger groups may be subdivided for effectiveness
In Mk 4; M t1-3; Lk 5; and Jn 1, Jesus assembles a group of disciples from those drawn to Him and sends them out in dyads.
 - c. Conflict among the Twelve: How differing world views, work experiences, and beliefs can be given free reign, or reined in.
In Mk 20 and Mt 10, disciples argue over who will have pride of place in Heaven: an *inversional hierarchy* is Jesus' answer.
 - d. Cohesion in the Face of Opposition: Both during and after Jesus' earthly life, external polarities led to a new sense of identity
Jesus claimed continuity with Judaism while challenging cruel or unfair inequalities in its development (Mt 23, Lk 18, Jn 7).
 - * **How did Jesus' group structures work? What balance between independence and communal responsibility did He create?**
-

4. The Christian Scriptures from the Epistles to Revelation

- a. The Council at Jerusalem: Shifts in Historical Identity, Inclusion, Exclusion, and the "New Rules" given in Peter's Dream
Acts.10 and the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) affirm some Jewish rules, refute others as qualifications for church membership
 - b. Group and Individual Responses to the Problems and Issues the Early Church Faced: Comparisons, Contrasts, Conclusions
Paul worries that some church members' behavior is less than exemplary when the groups are under attack (I Cor 13, Eph 4).
 - c. Being Called, Being Chosen, Being Oneself and Belonging to a Larger Group: Maintaining Integrity with Peaceful Interactions
Phillip's (Acts 8) spiritual midwifery; Paul's (Acts 9) metanoia; and Timothy's home (I Cor 4, Tim I-II) each led to ministry.
 - d. Vision, Longing, Potential for a Settled Life, Creative Tensions in Groups/Individuals: We are the ongoing "Gang of 12"
Vines/branches (Jn 15); Spiritual fruit (Gal 5); and the term ecclesia (Look it up) suggest ways of relating to each other.
 - * **How did small groups contribute to the growth of the church? How/did Sabbath/Sunday observance continue or grow?**
-



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Deut. 5:12-15
Is 58:6-14

Christian Scriptures

Mt 12:1, 8; 22:37-40; 26:36.
Mk 2:23; 4:37; 5:22; 14:32; 27:28
Lk 6:1, 5; 8:41; 10: 38-42; 19:1-10
Jn 10:10
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