

The RPCNA's Official Teaching on the Christian Sabbath or "Lord's Day"

Westminster Confession of Faith [WCF], 21.7 — As it is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men, in all ages, He hath particularly appointed one day in seven, for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto Him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which, in Scripture, is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath. Ex. 20:8, 10-11; Isa. 56:2, 4, 6-7; Gen. 2:2-3; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10; Ex. 20:8, 10 with Matt. 5:17-18.

WCF 21.8 — This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest, all the day, from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments, and recreations, but also are taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy. Ex. 20:8; Ex. 16:23, 25-26, 29-30; Ex. 31:15-17; Isa. 58:13; Neh. 13:15-19, 21-22; Isa. 58:13; Matt. 12:1-13.

RPCNA Testimony [RPT], 21.11 — We reject the teaching that the Fourth Commandment is no longer binding under the New Testament.

RPT 21.12 — God promises rich blessings for keeping the Lord's Day holy. Isa. 56:2-7; Isa. 58:13-14; Mark 2:27.

Westminster Larger Catechism [WLC] 115 — Q. What is the fourth commandment? A. The fourth commandment is, Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day and hallowed it. Ex. 20:8-11.

WLC 116 — Q. What is required in the fourth commandment? A. The fourth commandment requireth of all men the sanctifying or keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word, expressly one whole day in seven; which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian sabbath, and in the New Testament called The Lord's Day. Deut. 5:12-14; Gen. 2:2-3; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; Matt. 5:17-18; Isa. 56:2, 4, 6-7; Rev. 1:10.

WLC 117 — Q. How is the sabbath or the Lord's day to be sanctified? A. The sabbath or Lord's day is to be sanctified by an holy resting all the day, not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful; and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy) in the public and private exercises of God's worship: and, to that end, we are to prepare our hearts, and with such foresight, diligence, and moderation, to dispose, and seasonably to despatch our worldly business, that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of that day. Ex. 20:8, 10; Ex. 16:25-28; Neh. 13:15-22; Jer. 17:21-22; Matt. 12:1-13; Isa. 58:13; Luke 4:16; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Ps. 92 title; Isa. 66:23; Lev. 23:3; Ex. 20:8; Luke 23:54, 56; Ex. 16:22, 25-26, 29; Neh. 13:19.

WLC 118 — Q. Why is the charge of keeping the sabbath more specially directed to governors of families and other superiors? A. The charge of keeping the sabbath is more specially directed to governors of families and other superiors, because they are bound not only to keep it themselves, but to see that it be observed by all those that are under their charge; and because they are prone oftentimes to hinder them by employments of their own. Ex. 20:10; Josh. 24:15; Neh. 13:15, 17; Jer. 17:20-22; Ex. 23:12.

WLC 119 — Q. What are the sins forbidden in the fourth commandment? A. The sins forbidden in the fourth commandment are, all omissions of the duties required, all careless, negligent, and unprofitable performing of them, and being weary of them; all profaning the day by idleness, and doing that which is in itself sinful; and by all needless works, words, and thoughts, about our worldly employments and recreations. Ezek. 22:26; Acts 20:7, 9; Ezek. 33:30-32; Amos 8:5; Mal. 1:13; Ezek. 23:38; Jer. 17:24, 27; Isa. 58:13.

WLC 120 — Q. What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment, the more to enforce it? A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment, the more to enforce it, are taken from the equity of it, God allowing us six days of seven for our own affairs, and reserving but one for himself, in these words, six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work: from God's challenging a special propriety in that day, the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: from the example of God, who in six days made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: and from that blessing which God put upon that day, not only in sanctifying it to be a day for his service, but in ordaining it to be a means of blessing to us in our sanctifying it, wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day and hallowed it. Ex. 20:9; Ex. 20:10; Ex. 20:11.

WLC 121 — Q. Why is the word remember set in the beginning of the fourth commandment? A. The word remember is set in the beginning of the fourth commandment, partly, because of the great benefit of remembering it, we being thereby helped in our preparation to keep it; and, in keeping it, better to keep all the rest of the commandments, and to continue a thankful remembrance of the two great benefits of creation and redemption, which contain a short abridgement of religion; and partly, because we are very ready to forget it, for that there is less light of nature for it, and yet it restraineth our natural liberty in things at other times lawful; that it cometh but once in seven days, and many worldly businesses come between, and too often take off our minds from thinking of it, either to prepare for it, or to sanctify it; and that Satan with his instruments much labor to blot out the glory, and even the memory of it, to bring in all irreligion and impiety. Ex. 20:8; Ex. 16:23; Luke 23:54, 56; Mark 15:42; Neh. 13:19; Ps. 92 title, 13-14; Ezek. 20:12, 19-20; Gen. 2:2-3; Ps. 118:22, 24; Acts 4:10-11; Rev. 1:10; Ezek. 22:26; Neh. 9:14; Ex. 34:21; Deut. 5:14-15; Amos 8:5; Lam. 1:7; Jer. 17:21-23; Neh. 13:15-23.

Covenant of Communicant Membership [CCM]: Vow 5 — To the end that you may grow in the Christian life, do you promise that you will diligently read the Bible, engage in private prayer, keep the Lord's Day, regularly attend the worship services, observe the appointed sacraments, and give to the Lord's work as He shall prosper you?