

Features**DigitalMissourian**

[News](#) [Sports](#) [Search](#) [Classifieds](#)

Honoring the Sabbath

- Despite busy work weeks, people observe Sunday as a time to reflect on the past week and devote themselves to God.

By TARA STEFFENS, *Missourian* staff
November 18, 2001



JON ABRAHAMS/Missourian

On their travels through Missouri, Beth Markwell and daughter, Grace, stop by Cosmopolitan Park in Columbia to get some fresh air on the playground. The Markwells live in Illinois, but often find themselves traveling through Missouri on the weekends.

On a warm, overcast Sunday the Markwell family from Illinois is playing in Cosmopolitan Park. Steve watches his wife, Beth, and their daughter, Grace, play on the monkey bars, while Logan bounces from play set to play set.

Although they are not in church, they are taking part in one of the common beliefs of most faiths. They are observing the Sabbath.

The definition of a day of rest has changed. A tradition that once mandated reading the Bible, no cooking, no lighting fires and a ban on other everyday activities has changed with the times. Rest, for both Christian and Jewish denominations, can mean anything from the more orthodox views to enjoying a simple cup of coffee.

The word Sabbath is derived from the Hebrew verb shavat meaning to rest or cease. Every religion has a tradition of reflecting time. Muslims pray five times a day and Buddhists

"And on the seventh day God finished the work which He had been doing, and He ceased on the seventh day from all the work which He had done. And God blessed

nature.

the seventh day and sanctified it."

For Christians and Jews, the order to observe the Sabbath comes from the Ten Commandments. The Sabbath required that people should abstain from working on their own ends and interests.

— Genesis 2:1-3

"Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord, your God."

That long tradition has changed over the past few years. This is partly due to the fact that in the age of multitasking and six-day work weeks, a day of rest just does not seem to fit.

— Exodus 20: 8-10

"Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God freed you from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day."

Kerry Hollander, the director at the B'nai B'rith Hillel foundation, says the Sabbath is all about how we interpret the rules.

— Deuteronomy 5: 13-15

"We are told to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. That can be interpreted in many ways, but it's basically saying to make a distinction between the everyday and the sacred," Hollander said.

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath."

— Mark 2:27

Hollander recognized that the Sabbath is hard to fit in, but it is worth the while.

"We live in a Christian community and because of that, we have to make choices about observing the Sabbath. We try to compromise," Hollander said.

For her, that compromise meant allowing her children to compete in morning soccer games, even if that meant they were at services in their sweaty uniforms.

The Rev. Ken Watson, associate minister of the First Christian Church, spends his Sabbath doing yardwork and reflecting on the week's events.

"The Sabbath means taking time out of our busy lives for worshiping and meditation," Watson said.

"There is no particular day to do it, whether it's Sunday or Wednesday, as long as people find the time to fit it in their lives," said David Benson of Campus Lutheran Church.

Steve Markwell says that his family spends the Sabbath going to church and finding activities to do as a family.

"The practice of our faith is the cornerstone of our family," he said.



JON ABRAHAMS/Missourian

Lynzey Hannah, left, buries her feet in the sand with the help of Paula Johnson and daughter Sandtara Johnson at Cosmopolitan Park. For the Johnsons, Sunday can serve as a time to both relax and refresh for the upcoming week.

People who observe the Sabbath see it as a gift to set aside weekly concerns and devote themselves fully to God. Ministers say it is important to do this weekly.

"The Sabbath is important for a couple of reasons. First of all we aren't designed to go go and second we need to gather with like-minded, like-faithed people," Benson said.

Watson reiterated that all people need quiet times.

"People need those times when they are quieter to regenerate themselves," he said. "It's important to people of any faith."

"And on the seventh day God finished the work which He had been doing, and He ceased on the seventh day from all the work which He had done. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it."

Comments? [E-mail News](#) or [Sports](#)

[Back to top](#) [News](#) [Sports](#) [Search](#) [Classifieds](#)