

## **Honoring the Sabbath**

by  
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In 1981, the movie Chariots of Fire portrayed the life of two extraordinary English Olympians, Harold Abrahams and Eric Liddell. During the events leading up to the 1924 Olympics, they both demonstrated remarkable perseverance, sportsmanship and determination. But one event stood out that has continued to linger in my cranium.

Eric Liddell refused to run his best events in the Olympics because the preliminary qualifying dashes fell on a Sunday, a day he considered the Lord's day. Incredibly Liddell still managed to win a gold medal in a race which did not fall on the Sabbath. In so doing, he set a world record, 47.6 seconds in the 400 meters, a race he was not expected to win. He also won a bronze in the 200 meters. His life ended at the age of 43 while serving as a missionary in China.

Liddell's stunning example as relayed through the movie captivated my impressionable young mind. But wasn't taking time out for God on Sundays simply a question of balance? Or were Sundays, all of Sunday, the Lord's day as Liddell believed?

I always presumed balance was the key. Like most people, I remember having to work on Sundays as a kid but the manager was always good enough to give me time to go to church. And it wasn't long after I entered the business world where working on Sundays was considered something admirable, you just had to do it sometimes. I guess somewhere along the line I had rationalized that as long as a certain balance was maintained, working on Sundays was not a bad thing. Besides our competitive marketplace demanded that many places be open for business on Sunday. Most employees have no choice.

So it came as something of a surprise when I was shopping at the Ross Park Mall this past Sunday and discovered the reason the lights were out of one of the stores. "That store must be closed down," I told my cerebral companion. "Oh no, that's the Franklin Covey store. They always close on Sundays. That's part of their philosophy," she explained.

My mouth dropped. Part of their philosophy? Don't they know anything about success? What kind of quirky organization was this? They had to be open on Sundays. In the dark store window I could make out that they sold computer palm pilots. They also sold day planners and other business type stuff. Interestingly right beside some electronic gadgets there was a company poster which included portraits of Mother Teresa and Joan of Arc. I was astonished.

It's one thing for an individual to keep Sundays sacred but an entire company with a store in the mall? They had to be sacrificing huge profits. Even the Christian bookstore was open on Sunday. What was up with that?

Since I detest shopping, I gleefully told my sweetie that I could no longer shop on Sundays in the spirit of Franklin Covey. Then I raced home to find their Internet web site. As something of an Internet aficionado, I was immediately impressed with their clever homepage. As soon as I clicked on their site, a quote of the day came flying across my screen. It read: The real measure of a man's wealth is how much he should be worth if he lost all his money." - St. Francis of Assisi.

Wow! What an incredible organization. But why did that Sunday thing have such appeal to me? I had rationalized working Sundays with balance long ago. Perhaps unknowingly, there is a natural call which resonates deep within each of us that gently asks us to set one day aside for God. Like gravity, it just may be one of those invisible laws of nature.

Here's hoping that the Franklin Covey Sunday policy becomes a corporate spiritual health trend that catches on. Of course, we all know it won't happen unless consumers decide to make Sundays, the Lord's day as well. So I guess I'll start with me. I'm buying a new palm pilot from Franklin Covey - on Saturday.



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