

Why we have
Two Sunday Worship Services

By Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

The Reformed practice of two Sunday worship services

The Protestant Reformed Churches follow the long established practice of holding two official worship services on Sunday. Most of our visitors at first may not notice this because when they visit it is usually for one worship service anyway. But if you take a look at our bulletin you will find listed there the sermons for both the morning and evening worship services. The Reformed tradition of two worship services on Sunday can be traced back to the Protestant Reformation in the 1500s.

We realize that this is not a common practice in many churches today. For that reason we thought it good to offer an explanation of why we continue to hold two Sunday worship services.

The Lord's Day is a day of rest. The fourth commandment of the ten commandments requires of the believer to "remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."

This day is a day of rest. But we must not mistake the rest of the Lord's Day to be mere physical rest. There is no doubt that God requires of us that we cease from the activities that fill the other six days of the week. But this does not mean that we sit idle all Sunday long in order to "rest" on that day. This one particular day of the week God sets aside to keep it holy unto Him. That means we must dedicate and consecrate this day to the worship of God. Believers must use this day to meditate on the things of the kingdom of heaven.



This is a good thing. Just as we grow weak physically when we do not nourish ourselves with food and strengthen ourselves with exercise, the same is true spiritually. We need to spend a day feeding ourselves spiritually with God's Word and exercising ourselves in things that are spiritual. If we do not then we will become weak spiritually. An important part of this eating and exercising ourselves spiritually is going to God's house. There we can sit for a little while and hear God's Word preached. We can sing together with God's people, and we can lift our prayers before God.

What a wonderful privilege it is to attend God's house! This is how we keep the Lord's Day holy unto Him. I know, two times in one day? And then we sit there for an hour and a half? That seems to be a lot of time spent in worship in one day! But is it really? How many hours do we spend sitting in front of our TV sets or reading a book during the week? Three hours a week in God's house certainly is not too much time spent in spiritual matters, is it? In fact, if we

really analyze it, three hours is not enough! Besides, if we truly crave the food of God's Word (I Peter 2:2,3), and if we really want to exercise ourselves spiritually (I Timothy 4:7,8), what a wonderful opportunity to attend to these needs by going to God's house.

In wisdom our Reformed fathers set the number of worship services as two: at the beginning of the day and at the end of the day. This assists the child of God in keeping the whole day holy unto the Lord.

Frequenting God's house

It is true that the Bible does not set down a rule of two worship services every Sunday. But the Bible does make this requirement in Hebrews 10:23-25; "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, . . . not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but

exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." It is a requirement of every believer to assemble himself together with other believers in the house of God. Worship is necessary. The preaching and the sacraments are necessary for the welfare of every believer.

When given the opportunity to frequent God's house therefore, we joy in that opportunity! We do not count it drudgery to come twice a Sunday. We do not come merely because we have to. We see it as a blessing God has given us! For that reason, we gladly carry on the practice.

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