

Family Day

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Today I went with my family to the Natural History Museum. Cousins, uncles and aunties from both my side and my wife's side of the family also went with us, so in total we were 7 grown ups and 8 children – quite a crowd! At one point I saw a school group wearing high-visibility jackets and thought it might be a good idea to provide something similar for our mob. It was a perfect day, overall, with no tantrums or accidents; everybody had an enjoyable experience and some wonderful new memories have been deposited into the emotional banks of my children. My wife and I try to do something special with our children every Monday; it is the day we have allocated as our family

day. Listed amongst the 10 Commandments is the mandate to remember the Sabbath and to keep it holy. Humans have been instructed by God to take a break once a week and to make it a holy day. The day of rest shouldn't just be a space-out day; it should be holy rest, active recreation that re-creates oneself and reconnects not just the individual but the whole family back to God. Muslims have the Friday jummah, Jews have the Saturday shabbat, Christians have Sunday as the Lord's day. In many faith traditions, the community stops working and gathers to dedicate time to God and to each other. The principle behind this is powerful, I believe.



The fact that my family day is a Monday, and that Monday follows nicely in the above listed of days of the week, is purely coincidental – I don't believe in supersessionism anyway – but the reasons are quite pragmatic. Since I'm a pastor, Sunday can be quite a busy working day. So the next day, Monday, is the point furthest away from the busiest day of the week. My wife and I educate our children at home, so there's no concern about keeping our children away from an institutional school on Mondays. I try to keep Monday entirely free, refusing (as far as possible) to make any

appointments on Mondays. For some close friends and family, this is a known constant around which any scheduling should be planned. It's helpful for others to plan around me, but it's also incredibly helpful for my wife and children, who look forward to the one day in the week they know that Papa is going to be at home to focus entirely on the family.

My wife and I didn't always have a family day, but a few years ago we decided that we need to make weekly family time an important priority. We don't always organise day trips to museums or other grand activities on our family days – sometimes we simply remain at home and catch up on household chores and play a few board games with the children. With such a large, young family we feel that this time is so important for bonding individually with each child and as a group, creating many beautiful memories of shared happiness. As the family gets older, however, I don't anticipate this tradition to diminish; perhaps it will grow even stronger as the members of the family become more independent, with varied schedules, and the need to have one time in the week altogether will be critical for the sustenance of the family's group dynamic.

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