



# PASSION FOR TRUTH

WHERE NEW LIFE BEGINS

## “Ask Me Anything”

### *Can we go to public events during Sabbath?*

with Jim Staley

#### **Navigating Public Events During Shabbat: Balancing Tradition and Modern Life**

The question of whether or not it's permissible to attend public events, such as a child's sports game, on Shabbat is a concern that many individuals and families wrestle with. The conflict lies in the fact that these events often take place on Saturday—when Shabbat is traditionally observed—and can interfere with dedicating the day to rest, worship, and family connection.

In addressing this issue, it's important to first understand the **biblical foundations of Shabbat** and how to apply those principles to modern-day activities. Here's a deeper dive into the **scriptural guidelines** and **practical considerations** that can help navigate this question.

#### **The Original Intent of Shabbat: Rest and Refraining from Work**

At its core, Shabbat is a day of rest. The scripture provides a clear mandate to refrain from work, and this is the foundational principle for observing the Sabbath. According to **Exodus 20:8-11**, God instructs the Israelites to remember and keep the Sabbath day holy, with a specific emphasis on ceasing from work:

---

*"Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it, you shall do no work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." (Exodus 20:9-11, NIV)*

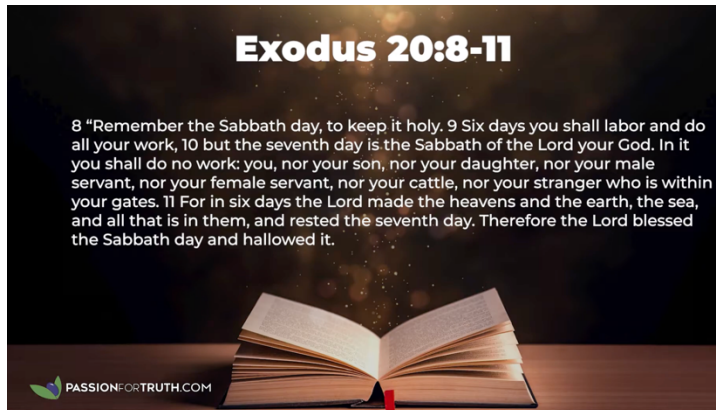
---

This passage clearly underscores the principle of rest and cessation from regular labor. The original intent of Shabbat, as established in the creation story, was for humans to follow God's

example of resting on the seventh day after a week of work. The goal was to **set apart** this day for reflection, worship, and recharging spiritually and physically.

## Shabbat: A Day Set Apart for Us

Shabbat is not for God's benefit—He does not need us to keep it—but for ours. It is a gift given to us for rest, reflection, and restoration. The Hebrew word for “holy” or “set apart” is



**kadosh**, meaning the Sabbath is distinct from the rest of the week. It is intended to be a time when we focus on our relationship with God and with each other. This is why, when we observe Shabbat, it's vital to disconnect from the busyness of everyday life.

The primary focus on Shabbat should be on **reconnecting** with family and community. This can be through

prayer, worship, meals, and restful activities that honor God's commandment. Above all, Shabbat should rejuvenate us, spiritually and relationally.

## Balancing Shabbat with Modern-Day Activities: The Dilemma of Sports and Public Events

One common dilemma many face today is how to navigate activities, such as children's sports games or public events, that often take place on Saturdays. In modern society, many extracurricular activities and sports tournaments are scheduled during Shabbat, which can lead to conflicting priorities.

From a scriptural perspective, attending a public event on Shabbat could be permissible, but it depends on the nature of the event and its impact on your observance of the Sabbath. Let's break down some key factors to consider:

### *Is the Event a Form of Work?*

The first question to ask is whether attending the event constitutes "work" in the biblical sense. According to the Torah, work is anything that causes you to exert effort or engage in business, commerce, or other laborious activities. If attending the event involves work—such as coaching a team, organizing a game, or engaging in physically demanding activities beyond mere spectating—it may violate the spirit of Shabbat.

However, if the event involves simply **attending as a spectator** and does not require physical or emotional labor, it could be considered permissible. For example, attending a short sports tournament, where you watch your child compete, may not be classified as "work" if it doesn't interfere with the purpose of Shabbat.

### ***Does the Event Foster Family Connection?***

Shabbat is about reconnecting with family, and activities that promote togetherness can be part of its observance. If attending a child's sports event strengthens family bonds, provides an opportunity for fellowship, or brings joy without detracting from the spiritual focus of the day, it may not conflict with the intent of Shabbat. In fact, participating in an event that brings the family closer together could enhance the Sabbath experience.

For example, attending a child's short game, where the family can gather, cheer on the child, and then return home for family time, could align with the values of Shabbat. It can serve as a way to celebrate your child's efforts, share in their accomplishments, and maintain family unity—key aspects of what the Sabbath is meant to cultivate.

### ***Does the Event Cause Disruption or Stress?***

On the other hand, if the event creates stress, rushes the family, or prevents you from engaging in traditional Shabbat activities (such as prayer, restful reflection, or sharing a meal), it may detract from the purpose of the day. The goal of Shabbat is not to cram in as many activities as possible, but to prioritize what will bring rest, peace, and spiritual renewal. If attending the event causes tension or makes it difficult to rest and reconnect, it may be best to consider other options.

## **A Personal and Discerned Approach: The Role of the Holy Spirit**

Ultimately, the decision to attend public events on Shabbat is a personal one. The Holy Spirit plays a critical role in helping individuals discern what activities are appropriate for them to participate in on this holy day. There is no one-size-fits-all answer. The key is to balance the spirit of rest with the practical realities of modern life.

For example, in one personal story shared by a well-known teacher, Jim Staley, his daughter participates in jiu-jitsu and occasionally has tournaments on Shabbat. These tournaments often last less than an hour, and they don't interfere with family time or spiritual practices, as they still prioritize family worship and church activities. Pastor Staley points out that while some may disagree with attending such events on Shabbat, they find no violation of the original intent of the commandment—no work is performed, and the activity doesn't detract from family connection or spiritual renewal.

## **Conclusion: Striking the Right Balance**

In the end, whether or not to attend public events on Shabbat is a question of balancing *personal conviction, family priorities, and the biblical principles of rest and reflection*. The goal is not to strictly follow a set of rules but to align your actions with the original intent of Shabbat. This means seeking activities that bring you closer to God, to your family, and to a sense of rest.

For some, this may mean opting out of Saturday events to maintain a sacred and restful day. For others, it might involve carefully evaluating whether a public event, such as a child's sports game, aligns with the spirit of Shabbat and contributes positively to family life.

By reflecting on these principles and seeking guidance through prayer, individuals and families can make choices that honor the true purpose of Shabbat while navigating the demands of modern life.

### *Passion For Truth Ministries*

P.O. Box 365 ❖ 5323 Highway N  
Cottleville, MO 63338-9998  
Email: [info@passionfortruth.com](mailto:info@passionfortruth.com)  
❖ [www.passionfortruth.com](http://www.passionfortruth.com) ❖