Television on Sunday

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., of the First Presidency


Now, the ancient Israelites, as I have already told you, had a great many rules and regulations regarding what they might do on the Sabbath day. They found it necessary to draw distinctions between what they might do in their homes and what they might do when they were abroad.

This raised difficulties. So in order to give a little more scope to their home activities, they made a rule, a regulation, that if they were in a street that was a cul-de-sac [closed at one end], each household along the street would contribute a handful of meal, and out of this meal they would make a cake, and then they would hang up this cake at the end, the open end of the street, and thus all the street became part of the household of this whole group. If the street was open, they did the same thing by hanging a cake at each end of the street where they lived.

My reason for making that explanation is that I think there is a difference between what we may do in our homes and what we may go abroad to do.

The Lord has told us what we may do in the house of prayer, and what we may do in the house of prayer we may do, I take it, in our homes. We may seek learning. We may read good books. We may acquaint ourselves with languages, tongues and people.

I call your attention again to the fact that the only places of gathering to which we are authorized to go, the only gatherings we are authorized to attend, are the meetings in the house of prayer. No other gathering is authorized on the Sabbath.

I think we may listen to good music in the home. I do not think we may go joy riding, nor to beach parties, nor on picnics! Nowadays as this conference is witnessing throughout this [Salt Lake] valley and in adjacent areas, you may have what we may call movies right in your home. We shall have them tomorrow, Sunday. I think there is a great difference between looking at a good movie in your home and going to a movie house, a very great difference. But the home movies we look at should be of a kind that teach things specified in the revelations as in order in the house of prayer.

Some of you are using in your Sunday Schools visuals aids. But their character should be carefully guarded, for in Sunday School you are in the house of prayer. But that gives you no license to go to commercial movies on Sunday, because we are not authorized to go to such gatherings. I think there is a sharp distinction in this matter....

Now, I am merely making some suggestions to you as to what I think are sharp lines of distinction. I think you may do anything in your home on Sunday or in the house of prayer on Sunday which the Lord has said you might do, and the words of the Lord in the revelation (D&C 59) tell you what you may do in the house of prayer.

[Submitted by Robert J. Matthews.]