

## **A Holiday From God**

Looking back to my holidays and all the enjoyment, I started to reflect on the meaning of the word holiday. Holiday was originally written as "holyday", signifying a day of dedication to religious observance. This word has now become applicable to days of secular as well as religious commemoration.

Still, more broadly it has become customary to speak of vacation periods and individual days of exemption from work. The word holiday has become secularized. Who still thinks of the religious heritage of the word "holiday" while vacationing?

When visiting some distant relatives one Sunday during our holidays, we mentioned that we were planning to attend church that evening, and, therefore, had to be away in time. "Church? A second service in the summertime? Our church is closed for the summer months," was the reaction. What happens to God in summertime? What have we done with God in our holidays? Some leave God behind like their dog and petunias. Their holidays are without church going or daily Bible reading and prayer. You can't look too conspicuous. Don't be too fanatic. Not everybody on the campsite needs to know that you are a Christ believer.

Fortunately there are others who faithfully attend church and use their free time not only for physical but also for spiritual refreshment. Bible reading and prayer can gain new meaning as we are on our leisure time, away from all pressure.

God is not a God who takes special enjoyment in routine spirituality. God wants His children to be His friends. Abraham was the friend of God. God is through Jesus Christ our Friend and our Father.

How do I live now with and for my Friend during the holidays when there is nobody around to tell me what to do? Faith can slip away so easily. We skip church attendance for a few Sundays. We forget to pray and Bible reading becomes rather irregular. Before we know it, God has quietly left our life. He has stepped out of it without us knowing it. God knows us only when we are faithful. He is out there and real when we seek Him. When we neglect Him and become unfaithful our faith slips away.

When we become unfaithful then it will happen what an old prophet saw happening: "Then the glory of the Lord departed," (Ezekiel 10:18). God leaves, but before He goes through the gate of the temple, He has a last but fruitless talk with some leaders of the nation. Their unfaithfulness became an abomination unto the Lord. And then the hard part comes, The Lord left His city. (Ezekiel 11:22ff).

Will this become our future? Without God? Without Jesus? Without Him - like so many are going without Him during their holidays? God can also take a holiday. He can quietly leave us. One day we may wake up and discover: God is no longer with me. I haven't even noticed that He left through the door of my heart.

We must say that the Bible also tells of the return of God to His people. He remains faithful, even when we are unfaithful. The generations following the ancient prophet found Him again. Their road back went through rubble cities and fierce persecution. It is so easy to lose God. To find Him again can be a long and difficult struggle. If we don't take God with us on our holidays, He may well take a holiday away from us. This would be tragic!

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September 1973