

Questions About Guarding the Edges of the Sabbath

By Pastor Ed Anderson

What does it mean to "guard the edges of the Sabbath"?

Answer:

To “guard the edges of the Sabbath” is a beautiful and practical expression used especially in Seventh-day Adventist and other Sabbath-keeping Christian communities. It means to be intentional and reverent about how we enter into and exit from the sacred 24-hour time God set apart — from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset (see Genesis 1:5, Leviticus 23:32).

Biblical Foundation

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” — Exodus 20:8

The command doesn’t just say to rest — it says to keep it holy, which implies preparation, awareness, and boundaries.

What It Means in Practice

1. Guarding the Opening Edge (Friday Evening)

- Preparing ahead of time — physically, mentally, and spiritually
- Completing chores, shopping, school, and secular work before sunset
- Cooking meals ahead (Exodus 16:23)
- Turning off or stepping away from secular media and distractions
- Lighting candles or having family worship as the Sabbath begins
- Entering into Sabbath with peace, not in a rush or chaos

2. Guarding the Closing Edge (Saturday Evening)

- Not “watching the clock” waiting to do secular things
- Closing the Sabbath with thankfulness — often with prayer, singing, or reflection
- Letting the Sabbath linger in your heart before rushing into the week

Why It Matters

- Protects the sacred time from being swallowed up by worldly busyness
- Shows respect and love for God — that His time matters

- Helps your heart, home, and mind reset in a spiritual rhythm
- Prevents the holy from becoming common or blurred

Just like the Holy Place in the sanctuary had curtains and separation, so the Sabbath has edges — sacred boundaries that help preserve its beauty.

A Heart Matter, Not Just a Clock Matter

Guarding the edges isn't just about legalism or being clock-obsessed. It's about:

- Welcoming God's presence earlier
- Extending reverence longer
- Honoring Him in the margins of time, not just the core

"If you call the Sabbath a delight... and honor it... then you shall delight yourself in the Lord." — Isaiah 58:13–14

Final Reflection

To guard the edges of the Sabbath is to build a hedge of holy joy around God's weekly gift of rest — to begin and end with love, worship, and intention. It's one of the most precious ways to say:

"Lord, Your time is not a burden. It's a blessing. And I want to meet You at the gate."