

## A Memorial Day to Remember

What does Memorial Day mean to you? The last Monday in May has been designated as the official observance of Memorial Day. The first official observance of the day was May 30, 1866 (one year after the ending of the Civil War). It is a day to remember those in the Armed Forces who have given their lives in the service and defense of these United States of America. The American flag is to fly at half-staff until noon, to honor and remember the more than one million men and women who gave their lives in service of their country.

In the church there seem to be two extremes regarding the celebration of this national event:

- 1) To ignore it altogether, and treat it like any other day
- 2) To so drape it in red, white & blue that the nation – and not the Lord above – becomes the object of worship and devotion.

Either extreme is inappropriate and lacking in a proper understanding of the importance of the day within the framework of our citizenship in this country and in Heaven as well.

In the years following the Civil War, the observance of Memorial Day saw all the church buildings of every type filled to capacity, and all the stores were closed. Unfortunately today on Memorial Day, all the church buildings will be closed and all the stores will be filled with shoppers searching for all those Memorial Day sales.

I am not suggesting that we should turn our Sunday service today into a patriotic event, and likewise I am not suggesting that we should gather together on Monday for a special service. But I am humbly recommending that we remember on Monday those who died for us, like (though not to the same degree) we remember on Sunday the one who died for all mankind.

Monday is a wonderful time to gather with family & friends to enjoy food, fun, fireworks and other festivities. But during that time, it is not only appropriate, it is important to stop and tell the stories of loyal service, valiant honor and the amazing courage of those who are no longer with us. Tell the stories of freedom and the price that was paid to not only obtain it, but to maintain it.

It would be a very moving experience to visit the graves of some of those fallen heroes, and talk about what their sacrifices mean to us. Then offer prayers for their families that God will bless and take care of them.

We cannot thank the dead for dying for us. We likely cannot thank the living relatives of those who died for their sacrifice. But we can and should thank God for blessing us to be born in this great land. And we should thank God for those who lost their lives so that we could enjoy all the freedoms and privileges that come from being Americans. This is a land of the free because it is the home of the brave.

*Robert*