Rendering honour on the Queen's Birthday public holiday

David d'Lima - FamilyVoice Australia, June 2020

As the first and oldest Australian public holiday, the Queen's Birthday gives the opportunity to render honour to our Sovereign Lady, along with various noteworthy people who are recognised by awards that are conferred on that day each year, under the Order of Australia, of which Her Majesty is head.

Action to honour the Sovereign, as the nation's highest authority, is a virtue that is commendable to all Australians, regardless of their political views. Such action accords with the way we have arranged our civic system in Australia. Furthermore, it is coherent with the following biblical precepts:

> *Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour* (Romans 13:7);
>
> *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him* ... (I Peter 2:13);
>
> *Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the king* (I Peter 2:17).

Christians also do well to honour noteworthy members of the public, and may wish to congratulate and thank those who are awarded on the Queen's Birthday, in accord with these biblical precepts:

> *... welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honour such men ...* (Philippians 2:29);
>
> *... the LORD, the God of Israel, declares ..."Those who honour me I will honour ..."* (I Samuel 2:30).

Among various duties, civic leaders are biblically urged to *commend those who do right* (I Peter 2:14). The Queen's Birthday and Australia Day are the two annual events on which honours are conferred under the Order of Australia, in accord with the civic leadership obligation to *commend* good activity (Romans 13:3).

The Queen's Birthday holiday is celebrated in all States and Territories, having commenced in 1788 - when Governor Arthur Phillip proclaimed a holiday in honour of the 50th birthday of King George III (4th June 1738). Since Britain has no public holiday honouring the Monarch, our decision to honour the Sovereign in Australia is evidence of independent thinking as early as our colonial beginnings.

The public holiday is held on the second Monday in June in New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia (and in the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory). However, the day is celebrated in Western Australia on the last Monday in September (or the first Monday in October) and in Queensland on the first Monday in October. Queen Elizabeth was born on 21st April 1926.

Australian Rules Football matches on the Monarch's birthday commenced during the first season of the Victorian Football League in 1897. As the only Australian Football League match held on the public holiday, the traditional clash between Collingwood and Melbourne highlights the Queen's Birthday.

As a concluding puzzle, it may be noted that while Her Majesty does not personally attend the annual Queen's Birthday football match, it could be said she turns up in about 50 per cent of such games.

Bible quotations from the New International Version © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society
- used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers