

## **Bible and the Headlines: House Rules**

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English Common Law holds that a man's house is his castle. This is doubly true if the English man is a Windsor and is in the line of succession. However a person does not have to one day be king to insist others obey the rules of his house. Here are a few recent headlines on home rules.

The Australian property web site realestate.com.au on June 27th published, "Home Rules Royal Kids Have to Abide By." The first rule mentioned in the article is that on July 22, Prince George's 12<sup>th</sup> birthday, in order to protect the line of succession he will no longer be able to fly on the same aircraft as his father, Prince William. On a lighter note, sources say the royals shun playing Monopoly and electronic toys and instead encourage outdoor play, "There will be lots and lots of outdoor play. ... Lots of bike rides, playing with their dogs, potentially some gardening." Many of the home rules make sense for a sovereign, other rules are just parental preferences.

The Guardian in its July 14<sup>th</sup> edition featured, "I'm Not Keen on the Clooneys' 'No Phones' Rule for Guests. But I'd Still Accept an Invitation." The celebrity columnist attributes the telecom restriction to Amal Clooney who believes it prevents unauthorized disclosure of personal conversations. The author comments to her readers, "Isn't hospitality about being expansively welcoming and tolerant? If you can't manage that, don't have people over." But, as her title states, if the Clooneys summoned, she'd go, no matter what the restrictions.

On July 14<sup>th</sup>, the Mirror contained, "'I've Got a Pub in My Back Garden - Every Visitor Must Follow Two Vital Rules'." The article gave a glimpse into the competition to turn backyard sheds into Britain's best mini pub. There were more than one thousand entries. One competitor revealed his bar's two rules, "1) You don't need an invite and 2) Nobody gets out sober." He also confessed that he spends more time in this converted shed than he does in his house.

The English publican in the previous paragraph would not have been able to abide by the house rules of one family mentioned in the Bible. The prophet Jeremiah was told by God to invite the Rekabite family over for a drink (Jer 35:2). The Rekabites declined Jeremiah's hospitality. Instead, they informed the prophet of their house rules, "We do not drink wine, because our forefather Jehonadab son of Rekab gave us this command: 'Your descendants must never drink wine. Also you must never build houses, sow seed or plant vineyards; you must never have any of these things, but must always live in tents'" (Jer 35:6-7).

Jehonadab promised that his house rules would give his family long life in the land where they were nomads. God used the family's obedience to their patriarch's counter cultural rules to condemn the people of Judah who refused to follow God's commandments (Jer 35:15-16). To honor their obedience to Jehonadab's house rules, God told his ancestors, "Jehonadab son of Rekab will never fail to have a descendant to serve me" (Jer 35:19).

The people of Israel were not following God's house rules so He sent Jesus. Jesus did not come to do away with his Father's house rules, but to fulfill them (Matt 5:17). The new house rule is, "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (Joh 3:16). This is a house rule even the Windsors are subject to.