

Why I Attend Every Service of the Local Church

Introduction:

1. Last Sunday afternoon, when the elders met together, concern was voiced due to the sparse attendance of some of our member, and the fairly wide variation in our attendance between the Sunday a.m. services and the Sunday night and Wednesday night services. To help address this concern:
 - a. Everett Hardin agreed to write a bulletin article on the importance of attending the services of the church.
 - b. I agreed to preach a sermon on "Why I Attend Every Service of the Local Church."
2. I have many faults, but forsaking the assemblies of the local church is not one of them. Since the Summer of 1953 I have made it a point to attend all the regular Bible study and worship assemblies of the local church. Over the years, when we have planned vacations, before determining where we would go, we would first find out if there was a sound local church within driving distance of where we contemplated going. Our children, from the time they were two weeks old, unless they were ill, were brought to all the Bible study and worship assemblies.
3. Religiously, everyone needs a reason for what he believes and what he does by way of serving God. I Pet. 3:15; I Thess. 5:21.
 - a. So why do I attend every service of the local church?
 - (1) By "the local church," I am primarily referring to the local church of which I am a member.

Discussion:

I. The Subject Viewed Negatively. I Attend, but Not Because:

- A. I am better than others.
 1. We must avoid the attitude of the proud Pharisee, Luke 18:9-14.
 2. It would be far better to adopt the attitude of the apostle Paul, as expressed in I Tim. 1:15.
- B. I am Expected to Attend.
 1. Yes, notwithstanding my shortcomings, I claim to be a Christian, Acts 11:26.
 - a. And the very nature of what they are religiously, Christians should be expected to attend. Does a healthy, growing child refuse to show up at meal times?
 2. Yes, if one is a preacher and/or an elder all things being equal, he is expected to attend.
 - a. But when we were out of town we have also tried to attend Bible study and worship services of local churches in the areas where we happened to be, where we were not expected and sometimes completely unknown by the local Christians.
- C. I never feel bad.
 1. Granted, I have been blessed with good health.
 2. But I am human, and all humans, at least occasionally, have their aches and pains. Such is life! Eccl. 12:3-4,7.
- D. I never get Discouraged.
 1. Even as Joshua was admonished, I, too, need to "*be strong and of a good courage*," Josh. 1:6.
 - a. I try to count my blessings and pray for wisdom and strength.
 2. But I must confess that I have my "down days" – often on a Sunday after worship!
 - a. Because of people whom I expected to see, but who were not present.
 - b. People whom I thought should be present, but were not, and had not notified anyone accordingly.

II. The Subject Viewed Positively. I Attend Because:

- A. I Want to.
 1. Note Phil. 2:12.
 2. There are good reasons why any Christian should want to be present.
 - a. Jesus is there, Matt. 18:20.
 - b. The best people on earth are present – people who:
 - (1) Have obeyed the gospel of Christ, Acts 2:37-41.
 - (2) Are trying to live right, Titus 2:14.
 - (3) Love me and have my best interest at heart. John 13:34-35.
- B. God wants me to be present.
 1. John 4:23-24.
 2. God is certainly worthy of my praise!
 - a. He sent Jesus to die for me, John 3:16; Rom. 5:8!

- b. He provides for me, Acts 17:28.
 - c. He has my very best interest in mind, 2 Peter 3:9.
- 3. Satan, on the other hand, wants me to be absent. He is:
 - a. My adversary, I Peter 5:8.
 - b. The adversary of Jesus, Rev. 12:4.
- C. My family wants me to be present.
 - 1. I have been blessed with a good family.
 - a. A wife who tries to obey Eph. 5:22,33.
 - b. Children who try to obey Eph. 6:2.
 - 2. If I were to just “lay out” and forsake the assemblies of the local church:
 - a. I would not be honoring my responsibilities as a husband and as a father.
 - b. I would be a big disappointment to all of them.
- D. It is Commanded.
 - 1. To go to heaven, I must do the will of God, Matt. 7:21.
 - 2. We are commanded to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, Heb. 10:23-25.
 - a. It is a sin to violate the law of God, I John 3:4.
- E. I Need to be Present!
 - 1. God’s word is taught, James 1:21; Acts 20:32.
 - a. God’s word is food for the soul, I Pet. 2:2.
 - 2. We pray together when we assemble, Acts 2:42; Jas. 5:16.
 - 3. We sing praises to God, Eph. 5:19.
 - a. And this is something we will be doing in heaven! Rev. 14:3; 15:3.
 - 4. We commune together, I Cor. 11:26; I Cor. 10:16.
 - 5. We encourage one another, Heb. 10:23-25.
- F. To Help the church Function Properly.
 - 1. The local church is like a body; it needs each member to do its share, Eph. 4:15-16.
 - 2. Every member is needed.
 - a. Song leaders, Bible readers, men who pray, teach and preach God’s word, who teach children and adult classes.
 - b. Ushers, people who prepare the communion, clean the building, etc.
 - 3. Much is needed outside the assemblies – visit the sick, teach the lost, help the needy, strengthen the weak, etc.
- G. To Provide a Good Example for Others.
 - 1. For one another, I Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7-8.
 - 2. For those in the world, Matt. 5:14,16; Phil. 2:15.
 - 3. Faithful, regular attendance is necessary for being a good influence.
- H. To have a clear Conscience.
 - 1. Jesus died to purge the conscience, Heb. 9:14.
 - 2. Scriptural baptism is an appeal for a good conscience, I Pet. 3:21.
 - 3. I know I **should** be present, Heb. 10:25; if I forsake I would have a guilty conscience.
 - a. And a guilty conscience can lead to a “seared” conscience, I Tim. 4:2!
- I. I Want to go to Heaven!
 - 1. I don’t want to go to hell, a place so vividly described in Mark 9:43-48.
 - 2. I do want to go to heaven, a place so beautifully described in Rev. 21-22.
 - 3. Heaven will be a place of worship! Rev. 4:10-11; 5:9-12.
 - a. If I do not want to worship God on earth, I would be a misfit in heaven!

Conclusion:

- 1. These are some of the reasons why I attend every service of the local church. More could be cited.
- 2. I cannot think of one good reason to forsake the assemblies of the church! Can you?
- 3. Are **you** a Christian; are **you** prepared to die; are **you** prepared to meet the Lord?

--Bobby Witherington, Oct. 25, 2015