

The Importance of Assembling

By Everett Hardin

Assembling at the services of the church is the best index in one's own spiritual growth, and is a certain indication of one's own interest in the local church.

Why Attend the Assemblies?

The Lord expects us to be present and participate in the assemblies. Heb. 10:25 reads: *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."* The Jerusalem saints *"continued daily with one accord in the temple,"* Acts 2:46. *"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ,"* Acts 5:42.

We should attend the assemblies because in so doing, we are supporting the spiritual body of Christ. The Holy Spirit says, He *"hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all,"* Eph. 1:22-23. Christians, all Christians, are members of the *"body of Christ,"* and cannot function without helping the church fill its mission in the world. This cannot be done without attending the services of the church.

Faithful attendance to all the assemblies becomes a prerequisite to faithful consecrated Christian living. Non-attendance indicates a weak and dangerous condition in any individual. **If any member could be counted faithful without attendance, then all members could be counted faithful without attendance.** This would destroy all services and the source of strength and development essential to both the individual and the congregation.

Among the greatest, if not the greatest, impact upon the general attitude and progress of any congregation is the attendance of its members. When our services on Sunday evening have only about 60% of our attendance on Sunday morning; when on Wednesday night, we have only about 50% of those present for the breaking of bread on Sunday morning, when attendance at the Bible classes is less than the membership of the congregation; something is seriously wrong. Where do you as an individual fit into this picture?

Individual Responsibility

Jesus said, *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,"* Matt. 6:33. It is impossible to obey this command while allowing the things of this life to occupy first place. When the churches assemble on Sunday and Wednesday night where would one be who wanted to *"put the kingdom first?"* You try to search for and obtain the rule of God and His righteousness in your life, and put that before everything else in your life — not second, but first in your life. We must give first place to God and His Son in our lives.

A spirit of indifference permeating the church can rob brethren of spiritual power essential to victory, and rob God of service rightly belonging to Him. God's attitude toward indifference was well summarized by Jeremiah when he said, *"Cursed he be that doeth the work of Jehovah negligently,"* Jer. 48:10. Also it was summarized in the New Testament when the question was asked, *"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"* Heb. 2:3. The spirit

of indifference is too often seen today in the attitude of brethren toward the assemblies of the church.

Each child of God is to “*grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,*” 2 Pet. 3:18. The various assemblies of the church are designed that each member of the church may gain greater knowledge and understanding of the will of God. This knowledge and understanding enables us to more effectively and efficiently perform the duties enjoined upon His children. As each individual becomes more proficient in service to God the congregation as a whole becomes more efficient in its work.

Influence is a force valued by all who appreciate its power. The kind of influence we exert depends on what we are. Jesus employed a similitude in the statement, “*Ye are the light of the world, A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid,*” Matt. 5:14. From a good personality emanates a good influence that is uplifting. When one moves toward God and “*walks in the light,*” he lifts others up with him. “*The law of truth was in his mouth and iniquity was not found in his lips; he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many from iniquity,*” Mal. 2:6. We either help or hinder every person we meet. Our words and deeds never die!

Christians are to be concerned about one another in order to “*provoke unto love and good works,*” Heb. 10:24. God gave us a plan whereby individuals would be able to lean upon one another for strength and encouragement. This is done when Christians do not “*forsake the assembling of ourselves together.*” We must be concerned about our influence upon others, our children, our companion, our non-Christian friends and a new babe in Christ. Do not advise by your actions that non-attendance is unimportant.

Mutual Benefits of the Assemblies

One of the purposes for which God gave the church is that we might be edified as members, Eph. 4:16. the edification of the body, as a whole, depends upon each member contributing his individual part thereto. This is the object of worship and fellowship in the assemblies. We need the strength for life’s problems and temptations, and cannot live the Christian life and render acceptable service to God without it. Every one of us should be determined, therefore, to obtain it by attending every service that is possible for us to attend. The services of the church are designed for this very purpose. They can be a blessing for our souls and make us stronger Christians. We must attend them, however, with the right attitude if we are to receive a blessing from them. No service can do us any good without our being present, no matter how much truth is taught. Every service will benefit us unless we come with an improper attitude — unteachable and prejudiced in heart. We rob ourselves of the strength we need if we fail to attend with the right disposition of mind.

Basically, the local church of Christ is a relationship (fellowship) between individuals. This fellowship is designed for those who are (1) partakers of the common salvation, (2) those dedicated to the common service of God, (3) subjects of the common authority of Jesus Christ, (4) renderers of common worship. In view of man’s nature it seems only natural that God would make provisions for Christians to enjoy fellowship (mutual activity, participation in common interest) in the fulfillment of their work and worship. The Lord has made such provisions in His Word. The local church is the result of that provision. We enjoy this fellowship in the assemblies of the church.

One of the greatest blessings in our lives is the opportunity to meet together and join our minds in worship to God Who created and sustains us. Every time we meet, whether it’s the Lord’s day or mid-week, we can be built up in our “*most holy faith,*” Jude 20. We can cast our

care upon God, and let Him dwell within our hearts. We can raise our voices together in song and express emotions which we may never feel able to express at any other time.

We should attend every service possible. Are there exceptions to this rule? Yes. There are mitigating circumstances which are beyond our control. One may be at the point of death in a hospital, or one may need to attend to a sick child or relative. Or one may be stranded at some foreign airport due to unseen weather conditions. One may make exceptions to the rule, and certainly there would be no argument from anyone on these.

In Matt. 18:20, Christ said, “*where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.*” We are a spiritual family. One thing we should want to do, is to be with those we love. When Jesus meets with His people it is to impart strength, direction, protection, and consolation, to help comfort and bless. This promise should cause every one to be present for every service he can possibly attend.