

More Than Once For More Than One Reason

Too many churches are plagued with an attendance problem. Some Christians think if they partake of the Lord's Supper Sunday morning there is no need for them to assemble with the saints that evening or mid-week. This accounts largely for the difference between the crowd Sunday morning and the few that assemble Sunday evening and during the week.

I have seen some who would come and partake of the Lord's Supper and then leave immediately. They would not even stay for the remainder of the one service, much less come to another. Then there is the story of the vacationers who asked that the Lord's Supper be brought out to their car so they could take it and then be on their way without sin. What is ahead? Buildings with drive in windows so one can drive through, take the Lord's supper and be finished with his duties for the week? I do not think it works that way! Many seem to think that the Lord's Supper is the most important part of worship. Some think that to partake of the Lord's Supper is the only reason we are commanded to assemble. All the rest of the things we do — sing, pray, preach — are just to fill the hour. They consider them incidentals. It is just a good time to do some of them since we are already come together. Their reasoning seems to be based on Acts 20:7, "When the disciples came together to break bread ..." This shows purpose (it is argued); and it is the only purpose mentioned in this passage. This is the same grievous mistake made by those who advocate "belief only" for salvation. They have seized one passage on the subject and have looked no further. Other passages tell us other reasons for assembling together.

Some have tried to limit Hebrews 10:25, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together ..." to the assembly at which the Lord's Supper is offered. But, it is not so limited. Note the context of the passage. The Lord's Supper is not even under consideration. The writer has instructed us to consider one another and to provoke one another unto good works (v. 24). This is the purpose of the assembling spoken of in the text. It is for edification and exhortation.

When one looks to the early church, he finds that "togetherness" is stressed. The early Christians met together often and for many different reasons. Sometimes they assembled together to learn what was happening in the name of the Lord and to pray and to praise God (Acts 4:31). Occasionally they met to discipline the unruly (1 Corinthians 5:4). They assembled to make provisions for caring for the benevolent needs of disciples (Acts 6). All of this was in addition to and along side of meeting for the purpose of teaching one another and exhorting one another and partaking of the Lord's supper. These passages and examples are given to us for a reason. They are worthy of imitation.

Does not our attendance say something about our attitude toward God, the church, and things spiritual? Attendance is a good thermometer by which to gage our spiritual temperature. Whose company is it that we deem higher than the saints of God? What is it that we do that we think is more profitable and enjoyable than singing, praying, or

learning of God? May we all assemble as often and for as many good reasons as did the Christians of old.

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