

How Important Is Attendance?

Introduction. Of all the questions that arise among Christians, perhaps the most common one is about attendance. Every congregation has members who attend maybe one assembly during the week and neglect the others. When we ask the above question we mean, "Is church attendance really necessary for salvation?" We are asking this question in the context of those who are able to attend church assemblies but simply refuse to do so. This discussion is not intended to apply to those who by reason of sickness, or other circumstances beyond their control, are not able to attend.

Hebrews 10:25 commands us not to forsake the assembling of Christians, which, according to Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2, occurred on the first day of the week. But churches also conduct other assemblies besides one on Sunday. Do these assemblies have any authority in the Bible? Other assemblies were conducted by the early church (Acts 2:46), and the fact that these assemblies were conducted by the early church under the direction of the apostles shows the need and importance of such assemblies. The time and frequency of these additional assemblies are left in the realm of judgment as we endeavor to save the lost and edify the saints.

These assemblies are certainly not without scriptural precedent, and are designed to fulfill a divine purpose and meet the spiritual needs of Christians. There are many in congregations who feel that they have done their "duty" by meeting on the first day of the week to observe the Lord's supper. What can we learn by studying attendance?

I. ***Four Great Bible Principles That Urge Attendance***

A. We must seek God's kingdom first (Matthew 6:33).

1. All Christians know that the "kingdom" is the church and "His righteousness" is the salvation that is now found Christ. This means the church and salvation must come first or have the greatest prominence in our lives (Matthew 10:37-38).
2. Every assembly is designed to help the church grow and to further our salvation (2 Peter 1:5-8). If we neglect these assemblies, we are not seeking His kingdom first.

B. We must make the most of our time (Ephesians 5:16).

1. To "redeem the time" is to realize its value and use it to the best possible advantage. A Christian must decide how he will spend his time. Here is time that he can spend with other Christians in the study of the Bible or worshiping God (Psalm 119:97).
2. On the other hand, he can spend the same time sleeping, reading, traveling, watching television, visiting with friends, etc. Which of these would be the best use of time? Choices of this nature must be made every time there is a church assembly.

- C. We must be zealous for good works (Titus 2:14).
 1. All Christians will admit that the various periods of worship and study arranged by the members of the church are "good works."
 2. To be indifferent toward these assemblies is to disregard divine teaching to be "ready for every good work" (Titus 3:1; cf. Ephesians 2:10; Colossians 1:10).
- D. We must be lovers of worship (Psalm 42:1-2).
 1. Coupled with these principles is the fact that every faithful child of God through the course of history has been a lover of worship (Psalm 84:1-2, 10). Here is a person who finds great joy and satisfaction in worship. He realizes his need for God and his heart and soul cries for the privilege of worshipping God. He can hardly wait to get to the place of worship (Psalm 122:1).
 2. What a contrast this is with some people's attitude! Rather than looking for an opportunity to worship, they purposefully avoid it. It seems strange that people would proclaim great devotion to God at one assembly and then disregard and ignore another assembly for the most trivial of reasons.

II. ***What Your Absence Accomplishes***

- A. To God, you show improper reverence and respect.
 1. An assembly is being conducted in His honor, but you do not attend. You show that you prefer the presence of others. Who would not want to be in the presence of the Almighty God? However, many make that decision every week!
 2. Furthermore, you rob God of glory and honor (Ephesians 3:21; Colossians 1:27). The service would have been more glorious if you had come and participated.
 3. Finally, you show a lack of appreciation for your blessings. God is the giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17; cf. Amos 9:13). Here is an assembly to express your gratitude to God. Will you fail to attend?
- B. To others, you hinder the salvation of sinners.
 1. First, when sinners, and even your own children, see you absent yourself from our assemblies they can only conclude that worship must not be very important and that the church and the gospel are of little consequence.
 2. Second, you make it harder for the preacher to preach, for it is difficult to preach to empty pews. The preacher is told by your absence that what he has to say is not important (cf. Ephesians 3:8).
 3. Third, you discourage other members. Weak members are encouraged to stay away by the fact that you do. Even those who are strong are discouraged by your absence (Romans 14:13).

- C. To yourself, you take a step on the downward path.
1. When you miss one assembly you make it easier to miss another. You also hinder your prayers to God. You cannot pray to God to help you live as a Christian when you deliberately forsake those assemblies which are intended to strengthen you.
 2. You also make it harder to overcome temptation. We need all the help we can get to defeat Satan (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8). Finally, you rob yourself of growth. Growth cannot be obtained without the proper diet, and missing assemblies will rob you of critical nourishment (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18).

Conclusion. These are solemn words. Those among us who forsake our assemblies must make some tough decisions. If you love the Lord, why do you miss chances to attend? By your presence, members will be encouraged to take the work of God more seriously. Many who are lost will be awakened and restored to their first love. The influence of the church will be increased because it will be taking a definite stand against indifference and showing its desire to be truly consecrated to God.