

You Will Be Missed

Introduction. Few subjects generate more resistance than faithfulness in worship attendance. Every church building has a silent sermon written across its pews. There are far fewer empty seats in the morning than there are in the evening. It isn't because the Bible is unclear, but because many Christians find themselves caught between two worlds, called to live spiritually while allowing secular priorities to crowd out eternal priorities.

Beyond the command to assemble lies a simple yet powerful truth: When your seat is empty, something God intended to be present is missing. I want you to consider what Jonathan said to David in 1 Samuel 20:18: "Tomorrow is the New Moon; and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty." Those are striking words.

David was absent from the feast because his life was in danger. Saul's jealousy had turned admiration into animosity and praise into pursuit. The one who should have protected David now wanted to destroy him. As David fled for his life, Jonathan informed him that his absence would be noticed: "You will be missed, because your seat will be empty."

David's empty seat said something. It reminded everyone that someone who belonged there wasn't there. The same is true in our church.

When a Christian is absent from the assembly, more is missing than a body in a pew. An empty seat represents encouragement withheld, influence diminished, worship silenced, and opportunities lost. The absence of one faithful Christian leaves a void that no one else can completely fill. Let's spend a few minutes and zero in on five reasons why you'll be missed on Sunday assemblies and Wednesday Bible study.

I. You Will Be Missed Because Your Encouragement Will Be Absent

- A. One of the primary purposes of assembling is to "consider one another in order to stir up love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24-25). Godly living was never intended to be lived in isolation. The early church "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship" (Acts 2:42), strengthening one another through shared faith and mutual encouragement.
- B. Every handshake, every smile, every conversation, every prayer, and every word of encouragement strengthens someone. Paul instructed Christians to "edify one another" (1 Thessalonians 5:11). We often underestimate the power of our presence. Someone may come to worship weary, discouraged, or struggling. Your presence may be exactly what they need. If you're absent, your encouragement is absent too.

II. You Will Be Missed Because Your Worship Will Be Silent

- A. God deserves the praise of His people. Throughout the New Testament, Christians assembled to worship together — and they weren't to miss it. They gathered on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7; cp. 1 Corinthians 11:17-18, 20, 33-34). They sang praises to God (Ephesians 5:19), taught and admonished one another in song (Colossians 3:16), prayed together (Acts 12:5), and contributed as they prospered (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

- B. When your seat is empty, a voice that should be praising God is missing from the chorus. The church sings differently when faithful voices are absent.
- C. But God not only deserves the praise of His people; He also obligates His children to it (John 4:24). When you intentionally miss God's worship, you show your identity with the world (James 4:4-5), which is why the church can take disciplinary action (cp. 2 Thessalonians 3:6, "leads a disorderly life").

III. You Will Be Missed Because Your Influence Will Be Weakened

- A. Whether we realize it or not, our actions preach sermons every day. The influence of a faithful life often extends far beyond what we can see. Faithful attendance says, "God matters. Worship matters. The church matters." Absence communicates a message as well.
- B. Jesus taught, "Let your light so shine before men" (Matthew 5:16). Paul urged believers to be "examples to the believers" (1 Timothy 4:12). Children notice. New converts notice. Visitors notice. Fellow Christians notice.
- C. It's easy to see how actions like drinking, dressing sinfully, and using profanity shatter your influence. People see right through you. But realize that the same is true when you're lukewarm.

IV. You Will Be Missed Because Your Service Will Be Lacking

- A. The kingdom advances when God's people work together. Every congregation depends on members who serve, teach, pray, visit, encourage, give, and labor for the Lord.
- B. Paul described the church as a body, with every member supplying something essential (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). He further explained that the body grows when "every joint supplies" what God intended it to contribute (Ephesians 4:16). On the other hand, when one part is missing, the whole body feels it.

V. You Will Be Missed Because Your Soul Needs the Assembly

- A. Perhaps the greatest loss is not what the congregation misses from you, but what you miss from the congregation.
 - 1. You miss the prayers.
 - 2. You miss the association.
 - 3. You miss the teaching.
 - 4. You miss the encouragement.
 - 5. You miss the spiritual strength.
- B. The Hebrew writer didn't merely command Christians to assemble; he connected the assembly with perseverance, faithfulness, and spiritual endurance (Hebrews 10:23-25). The early disciples were known for their continual devotion to worship and fellowship (Acts 2:42, 46).
- C. God never intended His children to walk alone. The devil has convinced many Christians that attendance is optional (That's how he devours, by the way, 1 Peter 5:8). God presents it as essential.

Conclusion. The next time you consider leaving your seat empty, remember Jonathan's words to David: "You will be missed, because your seat will be empty." An empty seat is never merely an empty seat.

- It's encouragement not given (Hebrews 10:24-25).
- It's a prayer not offered (Acts 2:42).
- It's a song not sung (Colossians 3:16).
- It's a lesson not heard (Acts 20:7).
- It's an example not seen (Matthew 5:16).
- It's a work not accomplished (Ephesians 4:16).
- It's a soul not strengthened (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

The church is strongest when the church is together. That's why the first Christians assembled. That's why faithful Christians still assemble. And that's why, when your seat is empty, you will be missed.