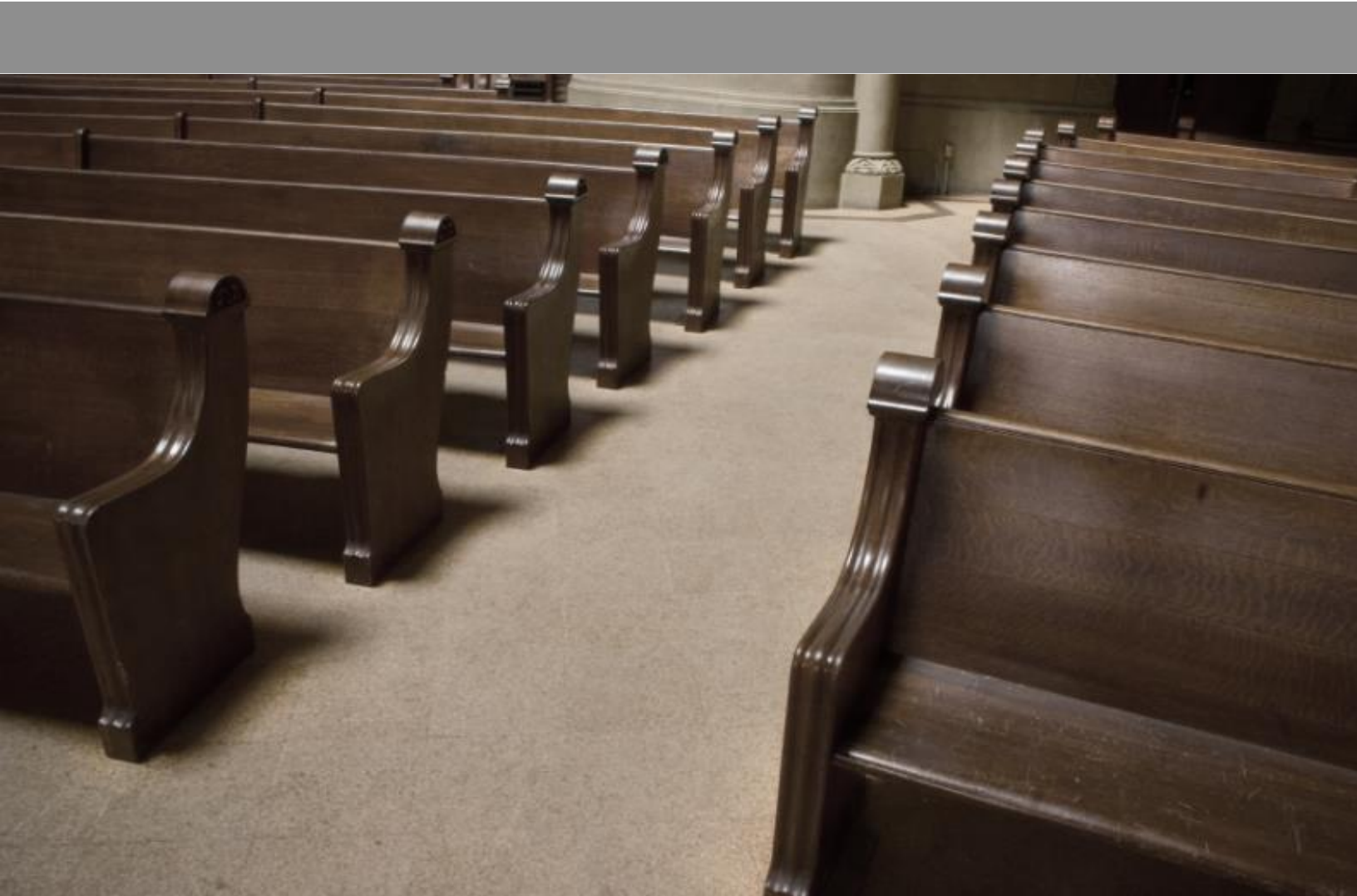


# The Christian's Attitude Toward The Assemblies Of The Local Church



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

# The Christians Attitude Toward The Assemblies Of The Local Church

Learn about the importance and necessity of attending the assemblies of the local church

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## Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

**Study Number:** DGW64

Written by Eric Krieg

**About the author:** My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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**My plea:** It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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# The Christian's Attitude Toward The Assemblies Of The Local Church

What is your attitude toward the assemblies of the local church? That is, what is your mindset toward the times the local church you are a member of assembles together? Are you deeply invested in your service to God as an active member of that local church? Do you make every effort to be in attendance when the local church comes together? Or, do you fail to see the true importance of the assemblies and fail to make the proper effort to attend the assemblies? Certainly, your attitude (mindset) toward the assemblies of the local church will go a long way in determining whether you will take advantage of those opportunities to worship God with your brethren. Proverbs 23:7 says, “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”

The local church is fully authorized by God – and is expected to assemble together. For instance, Acts 20:7 says that the disciples came together in Troas to take of the Lord’s Supper and to listen to Paul preach. Also, 1 Corinthians 14:23 and 1 Corinthians 14:26 make reference to the time when “the whole church comes together in one place.” Local churches are authorized and expected to come together on the first day of the week (Sunday) – as

indicated in their responsibility to take of the Lord’s Supper and take up the collection on the first day of the week (see Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:1-2). However, local churches are not limited to assembling together on the first day of the week. Instead, the local church is authorized by the New Testament to assemble together as often as the congregation agrees to come together.

Many local churches have decided to assemble together more than just one time in a week. For instance, many local churches offer a period of Bible study on Sunday (offering classes for all ages), two assemblies on Sundays, midweek meetings (often on Wednesday evenings), and other assemblies throughout the year (i.e. “Gospel Meetings”).

Should you be present for all of these opportunities to worship God and learn more about what He wants from you? Or, has God given you (as a member of a local church) the liberty to pick and choose which assemblies you deem to be “important” or “less important” to attend? Why are these assemblies even important at all? The purpose of this lesson is to help and encourage you to develop the proper attitude toward the assemblies of the local church.

## ***The Assemblies Of The Church Are Important Because...***

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In the first part of this lesson, I want you to consider two basic reasons why the assemblies of the local church are important. As you consider these things, you should realize that these assemblies do not find their importance in your opinion of them. Instead, there are a couple of inherent reasons why these local church assemblies are important.

### **They are opportunities to worship God collectively**

Christians are expected to worship God. John 4:23-24 says, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to

worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” Again, realize that God is “seeking” those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. Now, God has authorized that we worship Him both separate from the local church and while assembled together with the local church.

Particularly, this lesson is focused on those opportunities we have to worship God in the context of the assemblies of the local church. The Christian must recognize the importance of these collective (“corporate”) opportunities to worship God with his/her brethren. Particularly, please consider the following passages and note the specific acts that are authorized by the New Testament regarding the worship of the local church.

Acts 2:42 says, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” This early church in Jerusalem was steadfast in the teachings of God given by the apostles, the Lord’s Supper (the “breaking of bread”), and in their prayers. These are three of the authorized acts of worship for a local church. The other two can be included in the “fellowship” of the local church.

Acts 20:7 says, “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.” When this local church in Troas came together on the first day of the week, they are identified as being involved in the breaking of bread (the Lord’s Supper) and in listening to the message (teaching) spoken by Paul.

1 Corinthians 14:15 says, “What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.” Recall that 1 Corinthians 14:23 and 26 both help to understand that 1 Corinthians 14 deals with the assemblies of the local church. Now, Paul speaks in verse 15 about the prayer and the singing that will be involved at these times. You could also observe Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 to see that singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs is an authorized way Christians worship God together.

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 says, “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.” This is the only passage that informs us as to how local churches raise money to accomplish their God-given works. This free-will offering taken up on the first day of the week from the members of the local church, then, is one of the God-authorized ways the local church worships God.

So, in these passages, we observe a total of five acts of worship God has authorized the local church to engage in: Singing, praying, teaching, partaking of the Lord’s Supper, and taking up a collection. Now, as you consider the importance of the assemblies of the local church, you must consider the fact that each one of these “acts” accomplishes a significant purpose in worshipping God.

Singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs praises God through singing and causes us to reflect upon spiritual truths. Prayer is an avenue to express praise to God, give Him thanks, seek the forgiveness of sins, find help in times of need, and give all of your cares and concerns to God. The public teaching of God’s word in the assemblies causes all who are gathered together to focus on what God’s word teaches. Partaking of the Lord’s Supper is designed to cause everyone who is partaking to focus on the price that was paid for their salvation. Those who are involved in giving should focus on the blessings God has provided (notice that the amount that is contributed to the local church should correspond with the amount that individual has prospered, see 1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

In all of these activities of worship in the local church, the Christian’s focus must be on giving God the worship He deserves – focusing on God instead of focusing on self. And, the Christian’s attitude toward these opportunities to collectively worship God is one of joy and gladness! For instance, consider the Psalmists’ attitude toward the opportunity to worship God, as expressed in Psalm 122:1: “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go into the house of the Lord.’” How glad are you to attend the worship assemblies of the local church?

Do you anticipate these opportunities with eagerness? Or, do you dread these opportunities and desire to find some way to avoid them?

Please understand that the worship assemblies of the local church must *not* be viewed as being burdensome. 1 John 5:3 says, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.” God does not want any of His commandments to be viewed as being burdensome to you – including assembling to worship Him with the local church. Actually, you need to realize that if you do not enjoy and desire to worship God with your brethren now, you will not enjoy Heaven! For, in Heaven, all of God’s people (His church) will be gathered before the throne of God – worshipping Him forevermore!

### **They are opportunities to encourage one another**

Not only are the assemblies of the local church opportunities to worship God collectively; but, they are also opportunities to encourage your brethren – and to be encouraged by them.

God certainly knows that there are many things that are trying to pull every Christian away from serving Him with joy and gladness. He knows that we live in the world, that we work in the world, that we have worldly family members, and that we have many worldly associations. Therefore, we are under regular attacks from the enemy (Satan) and we must keep our guards up constantly in order to defeat him and remain true to the Lord.

It is so very easy, then, for our spiritual “batteries” to become depleted. We can easily become weary in our attempts to serve the Lord and become discouraged by all of the ungodliness that is around us! Therefore, God knew that His people would need avenues through which their “fires” for serving Him could be rekindled. One of the ways (though not the only way) for this to happen is through the assemblies of the local church! God has provided the local church as a base of fellowship and strength that is greater than the individual Christian! God does not want His people to be isolated from one another in fighting these fierce battles against the enemy! Instead, He desires for His people to be

joined together in local churches and help each other make it to Heaven and be victorious over the devil and sin!

The assemblies of the local church are one primary avenue through which God has authorized the local church to provide edification to the members of the local church! This concept is frequently found in 1 Corinthians 14. Although the specific context of this chapter deals primarily with assemblies of the local church in which spiritual gifts were being used, the applications regarding the purpose of edification hold true even today. Verse 3 says that the one “who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.” Verse 4 says that the one who speaks “in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.” Verse 5 says that Paul wished more for prophets in the Corinthian church than for tongue speakers so that “the church may receive edification.” Verse 12 says that the Corinthian Christians were to be “zealous for spiritual gifts” for “the edification of the church.” Verse 17 expresses concern over something done during the assemblies that does not edify others. Verse 26 says that whenever the church comes together, all things are to be done “for edification.”

Now, consider a couple of other passages with regard to how we can encourage one another through the assemblies of the local church and the acts of worship that are accomplished at these times. Colossians 3:16 says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Whenever the local church blends its voices together in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, the church is teaching and admonishing one another! Furthermore, Hebrews 10:24-25 says, “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” While we will spend some more time focusing on this passage later in this study, I want you to now observe the fact that these times of assembling are (in part) for the purpose of stirring/stimulating one another to love and accomplish good works.

## Summary

You can see the great wisdom of God in providing the authority for the local church to assemble together – and see how these assemblies are designed to both worship God and to help those who are Christians be devoted to serving God throughout their lives. Certainly, as a Christian, you must recognize the importance God has assigned to the assemblies of the local church (every assembly of the local church, not just one specific assembly of the local church)!

## ***Attendance To The Assemblies Of The Church Is Necessary Because...***

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Not only do you need to recognize that the assemblies of the local church are important; but, you must also recognize that God requires those who are members of local churches to attend every assembly of the local church that is within his/her ability to attend. Now, please understand that I am speaking of situations that are within an individual's ability to control. Therefore, if you absent yourself from *any* of the assemblies of the local church, you need to be diligent to determine whether your absence is actually due to a situation outside of your ability to control – or if you are attempting to justify your absence. Please consider some reasons *why* attendance to the assemblies of the local church is necessary for those who are Christians and members of local churches.

### **You have joined the local church**

What is a local church? In order to fully appreciate the necessity of attending the assemblies of the local church, you need to understand what a local church is. While many people put their focus on a particular meeting place (calling it the “church”), a local church is a group of Christians who have joined themselves together in a local geographic area for the purpose of working and worshiping together. There are many examples of local churches in the New

Testament. The church at Corinth, for instance, was composed of individual Christians who joined themselves together to work and worship around the city of Corinth. The church at Thessalonica was a group of Christians who joined themselves to work and worship together around the city of Thessalonica.

Therefore, if you have joined a local church in your community, you have made an agreement to work and worship together with those brethren. Now, you need to understand that part of the responsibility God has given to local churches is to assemble together (as demonstrated earlier). 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 demonstrates the responsibility and importance of each member of the local church by comparing them to the members of a physical body. Certainly, we recognize that each member of our physical bodies (i.e. hands, feet, eyes, ears, etc.) is important to the overall health and function of our physical bodies. If one of those members is not fulfilling its role, the other members must pick up the slack. In the same way, every member of the local church is important to the overall function and health of the church. Ephesians 4:16, for instance, speaks of every joint supplying its part (doing its share) and how this will result in the growth of the body!

Therefore, given the nature of the local church (that it is composed of individual Christians) and given the responsibility of the local church to assemble together, you must consider your responsibility to do your part to attend these assemblies. A member of a local church who chooses only to attend some of the assemblies is like an athlete who only chooses to attend some of his team's practices and games. Perhaps he decides he is too tired to participate in the practice. Perhaps he makes other plans that conflicts with the scheduled games. Or, perhaps he simply doesn't want to attend. Surely, that athlete is demonstrating that he is not devoted to the team's purpose – and he is more of a distraction to the team than he is a help to the team! In the same way, a Christian who joins a local church (knowing when it assembles together) and chooses not to be faithful in attending its assemblies *harms* the local church – and fails to fulfill his/her role in the local church!

You need to realize that every time the Scriptures speak of a local church assembling together (i.e. Acts 20; 1 Corinthians 14), it implies that the members of that church were present. You see, a church cannot assemble without its members assembling together! Therefore, you need to seriously consider what kind of contribution you are making to the local church. While there are certainly many different ways you should be contributing to the local church (i.e. financially, participating in its work), you have the responsibility to assemble. You need to consider how well the church could assemble to worship God and encourage one another if every member of the church assembled like you assemble. Would the church ever hold a week-long series of gospel meetings? Would the church meet every week for a midweek service? How often would the church meet on Sundays? Would it even meet every Sunday? Again, the local church does not assemble just because the assembly times roll around. It assembles when its members decide to come together and accomplish their God-given purposes.

Are you doing your part in these assemblies? Or, are you forcing your brethren (by your own neglect) to do all the work without you? How much do you *really* care about your brethren (who are wanting to be encouraged by your presence – 1 Corinthians 12:25)? Dear brother or sister, if you are a member of a local church, you have a responsibility – and you will be judged (in part) as to whether or not you have fulfilled this responsibility!

### **Of Hebrews 10:24-25**

Hebrews 10:24-25 says, “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Please consider the connection in this passage between encouraging one another (your brothers and sisters in Christ) and assembling together. Now, begin looking at this passage by simply considering how you can possibly fulfill the instructions to “consider one another in order to stir up love and good works” and exhort one another if you are not assembling with your brethren. Certainly,

that is not to say that Christians do not have the opportunity or the responsibility to do these things outside of the assemblies of the local church. However, the assemblies of the local church are a definite opportunity to do these things (and appears to be the focus of this passage).

Therefore, you need to seriously consider the answer to the following questions. “Am I stimulating my brethren to love and good works when I am at a ballgame instead of at the assembly of the church?” “Am I encouraging my brethren when I decide to go to a school function or family activity instead of assembling with the church?” “Am I really helping my brethren live for the Lord when I decide to take unnecessary overtime rather than being with them to worship God?” Now, again, I recognize that there are things that happen that are outside of our control and that will prohibit us from being at the assemblies. However, when we communicate those situations to our brethren (along with our desire to assemble with them), we can actually encourage our brethren despite not being present. Yet, if we are willfully neglecting to assemble with them, we will discourage our brethren.

Then, as you focus on this passage, you should not only consider the implications of the responsibility to encourage your brethren by assembling together; but, you should also understand that there is a clear commandment from God in this passage that concerns the assembling together of the local church. The commandment from God is “not” to be “forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some.”

Now, as you consider this commandment, it is common for folks to believe that willfully forsaking/neglecting just one assembly of the local church does not make someone guilty of “forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.” In the minds of many, assembling with their brethren once every few weeks or once every week is enough to fulfill God’s command. Then, there are others who tend to believe that an occasional (out of the ordinary) set of circumstances makes it permissible to willfully neglect just one assembly.

First, I challenge someone to tell me how many assemblies God is OK with you willfully

neglecting – and provide evidence of his/her answer with Scripture. The burden of proof rests on the individual who willfully neglects an assembly to prove why it is OK to miss that assembly. After all, God will hold that individual responsible. So, how many assemblies is it OK to willfully neglect? Could a person please God and willfully neglect 100% of the assemblies? Could a person please God and willfully neglect 75% of the assemblies (perhaps attending only on Sunday mornings)? Could a person please God and willfully neglect 50% of the assemblies? Could a person please God and willfully neglect 25% of the assemblies? Could a person please God and willfully neglect 10% of the assemblies? Could a person please God and willfully neglect 1 assembly? What is permissible – according to the Scriptures?

Second, notice that some were in the habit of doing this (it was their “manner”). This was something they were consistently doing. Therefore, these individuals had not just abandoned the church – never to assemble again. Instead, they were habitually abandoning them during particular assemblies.

Third, every time you willfully neglect one of the assemblies of the local church, you willfully abandon your brethren on that occasion! Think about it. How many times would a coach be OK with a player putting himself above his team by willfully neglecting to show up for practice or for a game? Wouldn't the coach claim that the player abandoned the team when he did not show up for the first game? Or, how many nights could a husband refuse to come home to his wife and spend the night with another woman before he would have abandoned his wife? Wouldn't he have abandoned her the first night he refused to come home – even if he returned the next morning? Why is it, then, that many Christians seem to be OK with abandoning their God-given responsibility to assemble with their brethren – even if it is only once or on certain occasions?

### **Of the responsibility to submit**

One of the Christian's responsibilities as a member of a local church is to submit. The Bible is clear in teaching that the Christian has the

responsibility to submit to the elders – and the responsibility to submit to his/her brethren (as long as submitting to them does not result in violating God's will). To submit is to yield your desires to the desires of another – to place yourself under another. Now, as we have already discussed, each local congregation decides when it will assemble together. We discussed that local churches *must* assemble together on the first day of the week – and they are authorized to assemble at other times (as determined by the local congregation). Now, I want you to consider the responsibility to submit – and how it impacts your responsibility to attend the assemblies.

First, consider the responsibility to submit if a congregation has elders. Elders have been given the great responsibility to shepherd the members of the local church and lead them in ways that are pleasing to God (1 Peter 5:1-4). Then, Hebrews 13:17 gives the responsibility of each Christian to the elders of the local church: “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.” Certainly, the elders of a local church (who lead and guide the local church) will be influential in determining the times of assembly for the local church. Therefore, given the responsibility to submit to the elders, this means that the members of the local church have the responsibility to do everything within their power to come together when the elders call the church to assemble! To willfully neglect an assembly would also be a failure to submit to the elders of the church.

Second, consider the responsibility to submit even if there are no elders in a local church. Ephesians 5:21 says, “submitting to one another in the fear of God.” Even when there are no elders in a local church, the church must still make decisions relative to its assembly times. And, again, if you willfully absent yourself from those times agreed upon by your brethren in the church, you are refusing to submit yourself to your brethren.

### **Of the need to demonstrate care for your brethren**

I believe that one of the problems that results in neglecting the assemblies of the local church is a



lack of concern about one's Christian brethren. The issue of being faithful in attending the assemblies of the local church is about much *more* than our own personal spiritual strength. We have already seen that it is also about worshiping God and it is about helping to build your brethren up in the faith.

Romans 12:4-5 says, "For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another." Allow me to encourage you to think particularly about the phrase, "individually members of one another." How often do you consider yourself to be a member of your brothers/sisters?

Now, please understand that if you are a member of your brothers/sisters, then their spiritual well-being is of great concern to you! You also will take an active interest in any opportunity to help build up your brother or sister in the faith. This would include (but is not limited to) the assemblies of the local church!

However, I want you to consider how you are demonstrating care for your brother/sister in Christ (1 Corinthians 12:25) if you are willfully choosing not to be present when the church comes together. How are you demonstrating your love for that brother/sister? Are you not actually demonstrating that he/she is not as important to you as whatever else you have chosen to do? Are you not willfully choosing to withhold the encouragement you could give your brother if you would have assembled?

Let me suggest to you (based on personal experience) that it is discouraging to see a brother or sister's seat left vacant during an assembly of the church – to find out that he/she willfully chose not to be present! While your brethren have come together to be encouraged in their mutual faith, Satan uses your empty seat as a source of discouragement! Certainly, you simply cannot fulfill your God-given responsibilities to your brethren if you are willfully neglecting the assemblies of the local church!

### **Of the responsibility to set the right priorities**

The problem of Christians willfully neglecting the assemblies of the local church is

hardly ever (if ever) *just* about assembling faithfully. The problem is usually much deeper. It is normally a "heart issue"!

One of the most common problems that manifests itself in the form of willfully neglecting the assemblies of the local church is a failure to have the right priorities and failing to seek God first in everything you do. Certainly, God knows where your heart is. And, God tells you that you can know where your heart is by locating where your treasures are. Jesus said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21). Then, in Matthew 6:33, Jesus says, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

Now, please consider what your decisions say about your priorities. You see, we only have a certain amount of time each day. How we choose to spend that time will certainly speak loudly about our priorities. In order to do one thing, I must make the decision *not* to do something else (perhaps several other things). The reason I choose one over the other is because it is a greater priority at the time.

There are many things that will convey a message about your priorities. There are many people who see this message. But, for now, I want you to consider the fact that you must be able to step back from your own life and objectively look at the decisions you have made in order to see where your treasure is! Is your focus (your treasure) on pursuing after earthly pleasures and riches? Or, is your focus (your treasure) on seeking first the things of God?

Are you really demonstrating that God is first – in every area of your life? Are you putting Him first in the job you take? Are you putting Him first in where you choose to live? Are you putting Him first in the hobbies and extracurricular activities you involve yourself (and your family) in? Are you putting Him first in the vacations you take? Are you putting Him first with your family and friends? Are

you putting Him first whenever you make out your schedule (or your family's schedule) for the week?

## **Of the responsibility to set the right example**

Similar to the previous point, the decisions that you make will teach people about what is most important to you. Therefore, other people around you will be learning *something* about God from you. They will either learn that He is the most important part of your life – and that everything and everyone takes a back seat to God. Or, they will learn something else. Perhaps they will never consider that God is a part of your life at all. Perhaps they will know that He is part of your life – just not the most important part. Regardless of which message they will learn, they will learn *something*.

Jesus teaches this lesson to us in Matthew 5:13-16: “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

For the better or for the worse, Christians are being watched by others. What message are you teaching through the way you are living? Specifically, consider what message you are teaching others about the importance of assembling with the local church. Are you teaching a lesson about the importance of worshiping God and a lesson about putting Him first? Or, are you teaching a lesson that blasphemes God – when you claim to be a “Christian” and fail to keep His commandments?

Please consider each one of the following groups of people – and the lessons you are teaching them by whether or not you are choosing to faithfully assemble with the local church. (1) Are you teaching your brethren a lesson about how you love them and how you will sacrifice in order to assemble with and encourage them – or are you teaching them that selfishness is OK for Christians and that brethren are

not very important? (2) Are you teaching new converts to Jesus Christ the importance of assembling together with the local church – or are you teaching them that Christians can willfully neglect these assemblies? (3) Are you teaching your children that God must come first in everything – or are you teaching them that it is OK to disobey God in order to do things you desire to do? (4) Are you teaching your non-Christian family members that you take God seriously and that no one is more important than He is – or are you teaching them that God's commandments do not always have to be obeyed? (5) Are you teaching your neighbors and co-workers that it is worth sacrificing to live in a way God approves – or are you teaching them that they do not need to fear God? (6) Are you teaching strangers who see your life what it really means to live for God – or are you teaching them a lesson in hypocrisy?

You need to consider what your example is teaching other people. Every time the local church assembles together, you are teaching someone a lesson about God and the importance of keeping His commandments. What lesson are you teaching?

## **It is the right thing to do**

There are many reasons Christians must be faithful in attending the assemblies of the local church. But, perhaps the most simple reason of all is because it is the right thing to do! Can you name a situation in which willfully neglecting to assemble with the local church is the right thing to do – based on the Scriptures?

Now, please consider James 4:17: “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” If you study the Bible at all, you should learn of the fact that God wants the local church to assemble together – and He expects each Christian who is able to assemble to be present at these times. Therefore, since faithfully assembling with the local church is the right thing to do, to fail to do it is sin!

Then, please consider Hebrews 10:26-39 (we will only summarize it here). Notice, first, that this passage comes immediately after the teaching we have considered from Hebrews 10:24-25 (which

instructed Christians not to forsake the assembling of themselves together). Verses 26-27 say, “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.” In verses 28-31, the writer demonstrates how those who rejected Moses’ law died without mercy. However, the one who tramples the Son of God underfoot, counts the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified to be a common thing, and insults the spirit of grace will be given a much worse punishment – a spiritual punishment for sinning against God. Therefore, the writer (in verses 32-39) exhorts us not to shrink back from following the Lord so as to experience destruction, but to be faithful and receive the salvation of our souls!

Please understand that knowing your responsibility to faithfully attend the assemblies of the local church and willfully neglecting to assemble is sin (James 4:17). And, this sin is just as serious as all other sins. The wages of this sin is death – just as the wages of all sin is death (Romans 6:23). Therefore, if you are interested in being saved, you must heed the warning and learn to obey God’s instruction to assemble faithfully with the local church!

## **Of the coming Judgment**

Hebrews 9:27 says that your earthly life will end some day – and you will be judged. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” Therefore, everything you have ever done while you have lived on this earth will be subject to this great Judgment – including whether you were obedient to God’s commandments concerning the assemblies of the local church.

Romans 2:6-11 says that God will “render to each one according to his deeds.” He says that eternal life will be given to those who “by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality.” However, indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish will come upon those who are “self-seeking,” do not “obey the truth” (but obey unrighteousness), and who “does evil.” In contrast,

“glory, honor, and peace” will come to “everyone who works what is good.”

Now, I want you to seriously consider yourself. Are you truly putting God first and obeying the way of truth by faithfully assembling with the local church. Or, are you seeking your own selfish desires and willfully neglecting to assemble faithfully with the local church. You will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment. Are you prepared to give an answer before the Almighty God regarding why you did not faithfully attend the assemblies of the local church? Even if you are successful in deceiving others (and even yourself), you need to know that you will never be successful in deceiving God! He knows where your heart is and whether you are truly interested in worshiping and attending with the local church faithfully!

## **Summary**

There are many reasons why God requires you to faithfully attend the assemblies of the local church. Please consider the Bible teachings we have studied – along with the applications that have been drawn from these passages. Ultimately, understand that you are not going to be judged by your own opinions or by your own conscience regarding the assemblies of the local church. You are going to be judged according to the teachings of God’s word. You need to be ready for that Day!

## ***Conclusion***

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Has this lesson described your attitude toward the assemblies of the local church? Do you truly recognize the importance of these assemblies? Do you really understand why you are required to attend these assemblies? Now, will you be diligent to apply these truths to your life so that you can be ready to stand before God in Judgment? Please, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12)!

## ***Study Questions***

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Must the local church assemble together?

When does the local church you are a member of assemble together? Should you be present at these times?

### **1. The Assemblies Of The Church Are Important Because...**

Discuss how the assemblies of the local church are opportunities to worship God.

Discuss how the assemblies of the local church are opportunities to encourage your brethren (and be encouraged by them).

### **2. Attendance To The Assemblies Of The Church Is Necessary Because...**

Explain how attendance to the assemblies is necessary because you have joined the local church.

Explain how attendance to the assemblies is necessary because of Hebrews 10:24-25.

Explain how attendance to the assemblies is necessary because of your responsibility to submit.

Explain how attendance to the assemblies is necessary in order to demonstrate care for your brethren.

Explain how attendance to the assemblies is necessary because of the responsibility to set the right priorities.

Explain how attendance to the assemblies is necessary because of the responsibility to set the right example.

Explain how attendance to the assemblies is necessary because it is the right thing to do.

Explain how attendance to the assemblies is necessary because of the coming Judgment.