

Thoughts on Attendance

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There is more to being faithful to God than “church attendance.” However, does faithfulness require it (to please God, to grow spiritually, to be saved)? I am not asking if merely the preacher and/or elders and other members care, but does God care? Scripture gives a resounding affirmative answer. Consider the following:

- **The Lord’s day assembly:** Saints are commanded to partake of the Lord’s supper to remember the death of Christ (1 Cor. 11:24). Both apostolic example (Acts 20:7) and uninspired early church history confirm that the assembled church ate the Lord’s supper each first day of the week. To provide money for the work of church, the assembled church was commanded to give on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1–2). These things were taught and practiced “everywhere in every church” (1 Cor. 4:17). To **willfully** miss the Lord’s day assembly is to disregard these apostolic examples and commands.
- **Other assemblies:** Are other meetings (e g., Sunday evening, Sunday morning Bible school, Wednesday evening, Gospel meetings, Bible lectureships, et al.) Scriptural or unscriptural? Various meetings besides those on Sunday were held with apostolic approval in the early church (Acts 2:46; 4:23; 12:12; et al.). Meetings for study, worship, and fellowship strengthen us and thus serve a Scriptural function (Heb. 5:12ff; 2 Pet. 3:18). In spite of the Scriptural precedent and practical need for these meetings, some still irresponsibly cling to the “Lord’s supper only” attendance habit.
- **A direct command:** The New Testament explicitly prohibits fornication, theft, murder, **and** “forsaking our own assembling together” (Heb. 10:25). Positively stated, this verse commands us to attend the assemblies of the church. It neither specifies nor limits these either to the Lord’s day or the Lord’s supper assemblies. To be absent is not the same as to “forsake.” The sick person who is thereby prevented from attending is absent from but does not forsake the assembly. To forsake means to **choose not to attend** when one is able to do so. Whenever there is a gathering at which we can be taught and exhorted and at which we can praise God, we are obligated to be present. Why would any of God’s children **not want** to be present?
- **Miscellaneous principles:** True lovers of God have always cherished worship and study opportunities (Psa. 42:1–4; 84:1–2, 10; Mat. 5:6; et al.). Can one seriously claim to “seek first the kingdom” (Mat. 6:33) while he carelessly forsakes its assemblies? What do you think? Does God care where you are when the saints meet?

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