

The Brown Street Beacon

*"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,
holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)*



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Why Should We Go to Church?

Everyone is tempted to do something other than go to church. We may not feel well and want to rest, rather than pushing ourselves. Or we may want to participate in another activity, sometimes related to school or work, rather than assembling with the saints for worship and study.

It's Commanded

The most important reason for going to church is that God commands it. Paul says, "not forsaking our own assembling together" (Heb. 10:25).

"Not forsaking" is translated from *egkatalieipo* and means "to abandon, desert, leave behind, leave in a lurch."

When Do We Forsake The Assembly?

Let me suggest that we forsake the assembly whenever we can be there, but choose to be somewhere else.

For example, a high school quarterback played every game but one. Instead of playing the last game, he decided to start a new job and work Friday night, rather than play football. That night, the football team lost because their quarterback abandoned them.

If the quarterback had been sick and unable to play, he wouldn't have forsaken his team by staying home. But because he chose to work rather than keep his commitment as a quarterback, he forsook his team, because he could have been there.

Among other things, this illustration shows that someone can forsake the assembly when missing just once, like the quarterback forsook his team when missing just once.

Jesus Died On The Cross So You Can Go To Church

Jesus purchased the church with His blood:

". . . the **church** of God which He **purchased with His own blood**" (Acts 20:28).

"And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for **You**

were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9).

Whenever you're tempted to forsake the assembly, remember that Jesus died on the cross so you could go to church.

If assembling with the saints was important enough for Jesus to die on the cross, it's important enough for us to do whatever's necessary to be there!

Stimulated To Love and Good Deeds

When we assemble and do the things God commands, we're stimulated to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24-25). Singing, praying, studying, partaking of the Lord's Supper, and giving, build us up and make us stronger.

If we depart from God's commands, the opposite occurs, we become weaker.

Speaking of false religious doctrines, Paul says, "These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence" (Col. 2:23).

Many years ago, my father shared this observation with me: When faithful Christians start missing the assembly, it's the beginning of the end. Unless they repent and again become faithful in their attendance, they soon fall away.

In my experience, strong Christians are faithful in their attendance, and weak Christians are lax.

Unfortunately, this still applies to brethren who are unable to attend church because of circumstances beyond their control. They struggle to stay strong, and some fall away, impressing upon us our responsibility to encourage them when they're unable to be at church.

Jesus Would Be At Church

Sometimes we use illustrations asking what Jesus would do in a particular situation. These illustrations help us apply basic Bible lessons, while removing personal desires and prejudices from the decision making process.

Here are a few questions to ponder along this vein of thinking:

- If Jesus were here today, what are the reasons He would miss church?
- If Jesus were here today, what would He think about people who missed church for other reasons, especially in light of the fact that He purchased the church with His blood?

If you knew Jesus was going to be at church, under what circumstances would you miss?

Use These Thoughts To Motivate Yourself

When you're tempted to do something other than go to church, think about the things we've dis-

cussed.

- You're commanded to go to church.
- You can forsake the assembly by missing just once.
- Jesus died on the cross so you can go to church.
- You're stimulated to love and good deeds when you go to church.

Jesus would be at church, if He were here today.