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FOR THE RECORD

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Offering	\$1738

assigning those who will lead our worship. We cannot read motives, but we can inspect fruit (Matthew 7:15-20). All we need to do when there is a question concerning someone's attendance is ask. If they lie, then God knows and will deal with them. Also, "Must they repent publicly?" Absolutely! Why? First, it is commanded (Acts 8:18-24) and second, public repentance acknowledges to the congregation they have turned from their sin. Too many are allowed to simply "slip back in" and begin serving again.

Question #5, If we say something to person who does not attend regularly, what if that causes them to stop coming altogether? Think honestly with me, by forsaking the services, they have sinned. No person who has sinned can be saved. Therefore, we are doing them no favors by ignoring their sin. By ignoring it, we actually put our stamp of approval on them and their sin, which makes us guilty (cf. Ezekiel 3:17-19). Many have falsely reasoned that if we give them something to do, it will encourage them to be faithful. I have never seen this work. If anything, it encourages them to continue in their sin. God has never instructed this as a motivation for faithfulness.

If you are honest and willing to examine your own life and find yourself guilty of forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, will you not put away your foolish pride and correct that today? Attendance is not all that is involved in Christianity, but it is certainly involved. We cannot reason to see how little can get by with and still go to heaven. Your attendance is important! You are needed at every service! You are missed when not present. It is like a member of the body is missing!



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**Times of Services:**  
Sunday  
 Bible Study:.... 10:00am  
 AM Worship:...11:00am  
 PM Worship:...6:00pm  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday  
 Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program  
 Sunday:.....7:30am  
 "Back to the Bible"  
 AM 580 WSKS  
 93.5 FM

**We Extend A  
 Warm & Cordial  
 Welcome  
 To All Our  
 Visitors!**

**“NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING...”**  
 Tim Canup

The purpose of preaching is to encourage and to build up those who are striving to serve God. It is also to reprove and rebuke, to set forth what sin is and to convict those who are guilty to turn from it. It is not to sooth the conscience of those who are guilty of sin nor is it to be popular or well-liked. Paul asked, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." There is a problem that plagues most congregations in the brotherhood; it is the problem of our attendance. It is a problem that too many have simply avoided in fear of offending someone. Fifty percent or more do not attend all the services regularly.

The writer of Hebrews' wrote:  
 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And *having* an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:19-25).

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The book of Hebrews was written to prevent Jews who had become Christians from leaving Christianity to return to a dead law. You cannot neglect so great a salvation and have any hope (2:3). The writer provides them proof they needed to remain with Christ. After all, we have a better covenant based upon better promises! (8:6).

By chapter 10, the main emphasis is on showing the beauty of enjoying complete forgiveness of sins. Verses 1-4 points out that the Law of Moses was a mere shadow of good things to come. Verses 5-18 shows that Christ came in a body prepared for him with which He paid the high cost so sins could be remitted. Then verses 19-25 exhorts them to be faithful in view of all this and three “Let us” exhortations (from NKJV) are given: #1 (vs. 22) “let us draw near {literally, keep on drawing near...} with a true heart in full assurance of faith...” #2 (vs. 23) “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for {the reason} He who promised is faithful,” and #3 (vs. 24) “And let us consider one another in order to stir up {provoke unto} love and good works...”

The word “considering” is from compound Greek word with the idea of reflecting deeply and continuously upon something; that is, “one another.” The word emphasizes an intense and abiding reciprocal concern that must prevail among Christians. Verse 25 describes how we can do this: “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...”

The writer said, “Not forsaking...” The writer has already dealt with apostasy, a total and complete abandonment, but that is not the word used here. This word has the idea of a repeated practice, not a once-and-for-all-time abandonment. This is a command given in the negative, that is, not to do something. What? “Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together...” Some have incorrectly read this as, “Not forsaking the assembly...” and have incorrectly reasoned that that is referring to the Sunday morning worship service only; however, the text reads, “not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together...” The purpose of assembling together is to provoke one another unto love and good works and to exhort one-another. We cannot do that if we are not present. Our absence discourages other members.

#### **Some Important Questions about Our Attendance:**

Question #1, “Which services does “the assembling of yourselves together...” include? Any time the church comes together, such as, Sunday morning Bible study and worship, Sunday evening worship, Wednesday even Bible study, Gospel Meetings, Lectureship (if the congregation hosts one), Singings and Vacation Bible School. It includes any service set by the leaders of the congregation of which you are a member. It does not include any private gathering hosted by an individual member.

It is easier to be a Christian when you are around other Christians. Why then would a Christian not want to assemble with other Christians at every opportunity? Jesus said, “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness...” (Matthew 6:33). Can one truly say they are doing this if they do not attend all the services? The early church gathered daily (Acts 5:42). Anyone who would make an argument or an excuse not to attend surely has a heart problem. Any intentional absence displays lack of love and respect for God and fellow Christians.

Question #2, “Is there a time that my absence is justifiable?” There is a difference between forsaking and missing a service. Forsaking is if you can attend and you choose not to, missing is when you want to be here but cannot due to circumstances beyond your control. What circumstances would justify my absence? By justifiable absences we are speaking of what God justifies, not what we would. We also should ask, “Would this reason prevent me from going to work or play?”

Does work justify our absence? Yes, when it is absolutely unavoidable to have a job that will prevent our attendance. However, it cannot be use as an excuse; for example, if we volunteer to work when we did not have to. We should honestly consider, “Why do we work where we do?” Is it because it is the only job we can work or because it pays well and gives us a good lifestyle. What is more important, a good paying job or our spiritual well-being? Do we really believe God’s promise that He will provide (Matthew 6:33)?

Sickness or tending to the sick is a justifiable reason for our absence. However, one person sick does not justify the whole family’s absence. The elderly who, because of health reasons, cannot get out (especially during cold and darkness) are justified. Bad weather which threatens our safety is a justifiable reason.

Question #3 “Is forsaking the assembling a sin? Attendance is a command, which if we violate are guilty of sin (cf. I John 3:4). Are there any non-essential commands? Notice the next verse of our text, verse 26, which begins with “for,” which connects what the writer just said with what he is about to say: “For if we **sin willfully**...” According to the inspired writer of Hebrews, forsaking the assembling is a sin.

Question #4, “Should those who forsake assembling be allowed to serve in our public worship?” The Scriptures are clear on this matter. In Isaiah 1:10-18, God pointed out that their worship was not acceptable because they had sin in their lives. Peter said, “For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil,” yet we ask a man with known sin in his life to lead our minds in prayer, which will not be heard. Paul wrote, “I desire therefore that the men {the Greek word for males} pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting” (I Timothy 2:8). Lifting of holy hands is not literal; it figuratively refers to men with holy lives (cf. James 4:8).

The Elders (or faithful men when there are no elders) have a very difficult job in

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Aug 26 – “Is Genesis History?” – 6:30 pm
- Aug 27 – Song Service
- Sept 3 – Men’s Business Meeting & Ladies’ Class
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell