



Hebron Herald

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Are Christians Required To Attend Services?

Yes.

Some say no, though. They do not believe a Christian is required by God's word to assemble with the saints when the saints gather. None can say how often a saint must assemble to please God, but they are sure it is not "every time the doors are open."

How can we confidently say yes and answer their objections? The Bible.

The word of God addresses this issue from several angles. One of the better known passages is Hebrews 10:25, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much more as you see the Day approaching." What does this mean? Those who deny the need to assemble consistently on Sunday say it simply means the church was not to cease assembling. We are not convinced that is the meaning, but let's go with it for a moment. If the church consists of Christians, individual saints, then assembling is the duty of each saint. Right?

Further, the purpose of assembling is to "consider one another in order to stir up love and good works" (Heb. 10:24). The ones who say it is not necessary to assemble with the saints claim to be the more authentic Christians, ones who really are spiritual and have true Christianity in their hearts—not being bound by tradition. Then why do they argue against regular, consistent exhortation of the brethren? Why condemn those who say the best spiritual life and growth will come by having fellowship with

We are not the apostles and did not see the Lord walk the earth after His resurrection. However, we have everything we need to convict us of this truth. The gospels give us a full and sufficient accounting of the resurrection of Jesus to form faith in our hearts and souls. When we are truly convicted, we will be compelled from within; we will not be able to help ourselves. We will teach the gospel no matter what threats are hurled against us.

- Steven F. Deaton

But without faith it is impossible to please Him,
for he who comes to God must believe that He is,
and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
- Hebrews 11:6

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.
And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.
- 1 John 5:4

Assemblies

Sunday Morning	9:00 a.m.
Sunday Evening	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday	7:30 p.m.

Elders

Tom Brown
Laymon Byers
John Smith

Evangelists

Ron Halbrook
halbrook@insightbb.com

Steven Deaton
steven@hebronchurchofchrist.com

502-957-5115

www.HebronChurchofChrist.com

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brethren each and every week?

Do all the saints need to be in the assembly? Yes and no. No, some will be sick or unalterably detained (work, taking care of the sick, etc.). Yes, those who have the ability and opportunity need to assemble. Paul pointed out that the church is like a body in which every part is expected to do its share (Eph. 4:11-16). If each part is not doing its share, then the body is unhealthy.

Consider this as well: When did the saints of the first century meet? It was on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7). Why did they meet on this day? Was it at the whim of the local congregation? No. It was something the Corinthians, saints throughout Galatia, and those in Troas did. It was a habit, not an aberration. Could they have neglected this practice and been right with God? Could the saints have said, “Paul I know you told us to take up a collection on the first day of the week, but we just don’t feel like going this week. We would rather go to the market and get some shopping done while the crowds are minimal.” What do you think Paul would have written in reply?

As mentioned above, being a member of a local church brings responsibility. When Paul went to Jerusalem and wanted to join the disciples there, he was met with resistance, then accepted (Acts 9:26, 27). Luke then makes this observation, “So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out” (Acts 9:28). Paul was working and assembling with the saints. When did they assemble? Their first assembly was on the first day of the week; Pentecost being on Sunday (Acts 2:1). At the beginning they even assembled daily as they had need of teaching (Acts 2:46). Can one be a member of a local congregation, but not uphold his or her responsibilities to that congregation without being displeasing to God?

This whole issue comes down to one thing as far as I can see. Men do not want to submit to the Lord’s will. They chafe under strict rules or commands. It upsets them when others point out their duties and explain their soul is in jeopardy if they do not keep them. The come-and-go-as-you-please attitude, especially as it is associated with the house-church movement, is “hippie” religion: dress how you like, be casual, resist the “man” (corporate worship, organized religion, etc.).

The Lord commands we observe the Lord’s Supper and give on the first day of the week (Matt. 26:26-29; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2). By Paul’s example we see he taught in such an assembly (Acts 20:7). When the saints at Jerusalem assembled they engaged in teaching, giving, the Lord’s Supper, and prayer (Acts 2:42). Another part of our exhortation of one another is singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). To take this lightly is a sign that one is not really serious about serving the Lord and being a part of the local body.

This issue is not going away. As our society slides further away from New Testament Christianity, the devil will continue to offer alternatives that are very appealing. Let us not get caught in his trap.

- Steven F. Deaton

Compelled From Within

There are people in this world who achieve high levels of success, some even seem super-human. Whether it is sports, politics, business, or some other field, the people who are the most successful and stay on top are driven from within. They do not have people pushing them to do whatever it is they do. Yes, they have those who encourage them, especially when they are down. Still, if they did not want what they were going after, they would not succeed no matter how much exhortation they received.

Christians must be compelled from within. If we are not devoted to serving the Lord from our heart, then no matter how many times we sit in a Bible class or attend worship services we will not grow. So, how are we compelled from within? Peter gives the answer.

In Acts 4, Peter and John were arrested for preaching the resurrection. The council decided to threaten them, telling them “not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus” (Acts 4:18). Peter’s reply was simple, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19, 20). In other words, we cannot help it. What we have seen and heard compels us to speak in the name of Jesus.