

Not A Covid Casualty: A Victorious Church Is Essential

Introduction:

- One sunny Sunday morning, Henry Jones awoke to find his wife standing over him, shaking him by the shoulder. "You have to get up," she urged. "We have to get ready for church." "I don't want to go to church," he replied. "I want to stay in bed." Crossing her arms over her chest, his wife demanded, "Give me three good reasons why you should stay in bed and not go to church." "OK," he answered. "First, I don't get anything out of the service. Second, I don't like the people there. And third, no one there likes me. Now can you give me three good reasons why I should go to church?" His wife responded, "First, it will do you some good. Second, there are people who really do like you, and they'll miss you if you aren't there. And third, you're the minister!"
- "I don't have to go to church to be a Christian"
- We need Biblical Christianity not homespun theology
- Important: this verse indicates same plane as faith in Word and walking in Love

I. Submission

- James 4:7 - our success spiritually is related to our submission to God (His Way)
- Not submitted to God until submitted to the church and pastors: Prove it!
- Ephesians 4:8,11-12
- Most Church people want chaplains - encouraging word, weddings funerals consoling
- I Timothy 3:4-5 - "care" - maintain order
- Hebrews 13:7, 17 - obey, rule - read SFL Bible note from this verse
- What about obeying God not man? Acts 4:19 - Peter was obeying the central truth of the entire Bible, not a theological or operational opinion.

II. Assembling

- IGNATIUS says, "When ye frequently, and in numbers meet together, the powers of Satan are overthrown, and his mischief is neutralized by your likemindedness in the faith." To neglect such assemblies together might end in apostasy at last.
- A Churchgoer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. "I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all." This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher: I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this: They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"
- Psalm 122:1 - A man after God's heart was glad to go to the assembly
- Acts 2:42 - continued steadfastly: doctrine, fellowship, break bread and prayer
- Philippians 1:5-7 - fellowship - grace (spiritual blessing) - corporate anointing
- Luke 4:16 - Jesus (our example) as accustomed to going to the public assembly

III. Selflessness

- admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another
- You are missed
- You are here for others - NOT what about me

IV. End-times

- Harder - difference between Victory or Defeat
- The warning about apostasy that follows (26-39) implies that people who deliberately and persistently abandon the fellowship of Christian believers are in danger of abandoning the Lord himself! Positively, we can provoke one another to love and good works by meeting together to encourage one another. As in 3:13, such encouragement is best understood as involving a form of exhortation based on Scripture, following the writer's own example in his 'word of exhortation' (13:22). The urgency of this is underlined by an allusion to the nearness of Christ's return and the final judgment (and all the more as you see the Day approaching).

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- Evangelism - makes a statement that we are serious about God! Empty chairs preach!

Conclusion:

- I Peter 5:8 - Stronger together - enemy picks off the loner
- Some people fight to get here; sometimes problems at church; but its about Him!

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Hebrews 10:23-25 AMP

23So let us seize and hold fast and retain without wavering the [a]hope we cherish and confess and our acknowledgement of it, for He Who promised is reliable (sure) and faithful to His word. 24And let us consider and give [b]attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities, 25Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching.

[Jas 4:7 NASB] 7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

[Eph 4:8, 11-12 NASB] 8 Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." ... 11 And He gave some [as] apostles, and some [as] prophets, and some [as] evangelists, and some [as] pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

[1Ti 3:4-5 NASB] 4 [He must be] one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity 5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

[Heb 13:7, 17 NASB] 7 Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. ... 17 Obey your leaders and submit [to them,] for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

[Act 4:19 NASB] 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge;

[Psa 122:1 NASB] 1 A Song of Ascents, of David. I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

[Act 2:42 NASB] 42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

[Luk 4:16 NASB] 16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.

[1Pe 5:8 NASB] 8 Be of sober [spirit,] be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.