Do You Love “Going To Church”?

(by Jonathan Perz)

It is not uncommon to view assembling with the saints (more commonly referred to as "going to church") merely as a command, a duty, a responsibility and a necessity for a Christian. Beyond a doubt, it is a command to be obeyed. The Hebrew writer said, ***"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching"*** ([**Hebrews 10:24-25**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Heb.%2010.24-25)).

Yet, for some, this duty is more of a chore. It becomes an inconvenience, a trial, a challenge, a burden to bear. It is a toil and wearisome. This manifests itself in frequent absences. This manifests itself in forsaking. Why is that? Is it the church? Is it the assembly itself? Perhaps.

Some, thinking it is exactly that, are attracted to the novel—the next "new approach" in a long list of new approaches (spanning two millennium)—looking for just that "fix" to their "boring church" problem. For a time, they might find happiness, excitement and a thrill. They "feel" like the fire has returned. They "feel" God moving in their lives all of a sudden. They somehow "feel" more "spiritual."

Have you ever noticed how this "feeling" is much like the "feeling" you get whenever you do something "new" and "different." When the "new" becomes "old" ... then what? Is it time to look for the next "fix" to your "new" church problem? Such "spiritual feeling” junkies will never be satisfied. They will always need another "spiritual high" to keep them going. They will always need a new "feeling" to keep them excited about God. The irony is that it is not a "Spiritual" high, but a "carnal" high that such folks are experiencing (i.e., it appeals to the flesh, not the spirit). This, my friends, is not Christianity.

Instead of looking outward, perhaps the problem is inward? Have you ever pondered your own personal motivation behind assembling with Christians?

Many years ago, I asked an older preacher about the problem of those who frequently forsake the assemblies of a church. When I asked him what he did to address the issue, he said, *"Teach them to love Jesus more."* I thought this was a flippant and casual answer (for a time, I even resented him for it), but as the years have passed, I have come to realize the genuine wisdom behind this simple counsel.

Assembling with Christians is deeply rooted in a love for Jesus and His disciples. This is the game changer. It isn't an external experience (unless of course that experience consists of feeling the love your fellow disciples have for you, but such a one-sided experience is shallow and will not suffice). It is an internal experience. It is an issue of heart. You either love Jesus with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength and His disciples as yourself or you don't.

Imagine assemblies where at the root of everything done ... and I mean everything ... the motivation is a true and unfettered love for Jesus and His disciples. What kind of assembly would that be?

Now realize, if you love God, you will worship Him His way, not your way ([**Isaiah 55:8-9**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Isa.%2055.8-9)). Jesus did say we must not only worship Him in spirit, but in truth ([**John 4:23-24**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/John%204.23-24)). One who loves Jesus will keep His commandments ([**John 14:15**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/John%2014.15)) and his worship will be truthful.

Yet, equally as important, you will worship Him in spirit! Imagine a dynamic where everyone else in the room came to express their love for God, for His Son, for His Spirit. Imagine a situation where that is at the core of each participant's desire for being there. The worshippers weren't thinking: *"I must be here to get to heaven."* They are all thinking: *"I love my Lord and my brethren. Where else would I be?!"*

In such an assembly, there would be no need for all of the "artificial stimulants" commonly used to keep things moving, keep things exciting, keep things "amped up." It would all be generated internally. Love flowing from heart to heart, as voices are lifted to God in praise and adoration ([**Ephesians 5:19**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Eph.%205.19); [**Colossians 3:16**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Col.%203.16); [**Hebrews 13:15**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Heb.%2013.15)). Love realized in desiring to encourage and provoke one another to further love and good works ([**Hebrews 10:24-25**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Heb.%2010.24-25)). No quick "fixes." No "novelty." Just a simple, deep, abiding, demonstrated love that manifests itself every single day of one's life. Not only will this fix your desire to assemble, it will make the assemblies everything God intended them to be.

Now, that is a reason to get out of bed on Sunday morning. That is a reason to head to a Bible study, or a gospel meeting, or a singing, or a worship service, or a devotional, or any other such gathering of Christians (even after a long day at work). Your love of Jesus and your love of His disciples will overcome almost any obstacle or hindrance that you have allowed to keep you from assembling! If you do not assemble, it will be because you cannot assemble, not because you did not assemble!

Your motivation is now higher, purer, greater! Your zeal & fervor, as it is shared, will transform what you once thought was a problem into something that is a blessing. Your genuine enthusiasm for assembling with the saints will be contagious. It will catch on. Before long, your "imagined" assembly will be your real assembly. Problem solved. The command to not forsake the assembling will no longer be an issue for you.

So, how do you love Jesus more and His disciples more? Realize what your sins have cost you! Realize what His life has bought you! Realize that you are not alone in your desperate need for God! The real question will then be: In light of His giving His life to save us from our sins, how can you not love Jesus and His disciples more?!? ([**John 3:16**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/John%203.16); [**Romans 5:6-11**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Rom.%205.6-11); [**1 John 3:16**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20John%203.16))