

The importance of Church attendance

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 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. For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries" ([Hebrews 10:23-27](#)).

Attendance has long been a problem. Obviously, since the writer of Hebrews mentions that there are some even in the first century having the habit of missing assemblies. The reason the writer is encouraging attendance is that only there can Christians receive the encouragement to "keep on keeping on." It is so easy to slip into sin, but if we willfully sin after knowing we ought not to sin, then there is nothing left to draw us out of sin. So instead of starting down the slippery slope of sin, we need to be with our brethren to receive constant reminders to do what is right.

Is missing assemblies a willful sin? I don't think that is the point of this passage. The warning is that those who miss services are likely to be ensnared by sin. That is something we have all seen. One of the earliest warning signs of weakness in a brother is their lack of attendance. It indicates that worshiping God and being with the brethren is not a priority. Because they do not have the kingdom of God first in their lives, they are easily distracted by the world. Recall the parable of the sower:

"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside" ([Matthew 13:19](#)). These are the Christians who

fall away because they never learn. They don't attend classes, they rarely come to worship services, and as a result they have no armor to protect them from Satan.

"But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles" ([Matthew 13:20-21](#)). These are the Christians who are led more by their emotions than their reason. They are enthusiastic at the beginning, but they quickly burn themselves out. Because they have no depth to their faith, because they have little knowledge to fall back on, they easily become discouraged at the slightest difficulty. These are your "high maintenance" Christians. They consume a lot of time, and rarely last, because they don't have endurance. At the beginning they come every chance they get, then they start missing classes, and then worship services, as they become more and more despondent. Because they cut themselves off from encouragement, they rapidly wither.

"Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful" ([Matthew 13:22](#)). This person also starts out with good intentions, but he has a priority problem. He lets other things come before serving God. He comes, but only when it is convenient. At first, it might be often, but it doesn't take long before there are so many other things that need to be done. Again, because of the lack of encouragement and the stability of knowledge, he withers away.

Notice what Jesus said about the good ground. *"But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty"* ([Matthew 13:23](#)). The seed is the word of God. The person represented by the good ground both hears the word and understands it. That implies a

lot of diligent study! You don't gain understanding by hit-and-miss attendance at services, classes, and meetings.

Or as God said to Israel, *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children"* ([Hosea 4:6](#)). A lack of attendance leads to a lack of knowledge; a lack of knowledge leads to weakness and susceptibility to Satan's attacks.

Should a Person be Withdrawn from for Lack of Attendance?

Lack of attendance is much like [II Timothy 2:15](#), *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* We understand that study is essential in producing strong Christians. A lack of personal study is a sure sign that a Christian will not make it in the long run. But would you withdraw from a person because they are not studying? Because that is really where this question is leading. Many feel that the only appropriate response to sin is withdrawal.

"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh" ([Jude 20-23](#)). Different people will require different tactics in order to save. Doubters need a compassionate response, gently guiding them back to the truth. Rash people need a quick response, sharp rebukes and a no-nonsense approach before they are overcome by sin. Willful sinners need a strong response, a clear statement that they are in danger, a willingness to receive them back if they will repent, but a rejection if they persist in their sin. See "[Effective Rebukes](#)" for a detailed discussion on this topic.

God tells us that we need to study and to attend because such are good for us. Since sin is breaking God's law ([1 John 3:4](#)), then not studying and not attending are sins. However, the appropriate response to these sins cannot be approached with a "one size fits all" mentality. The goal is to help get people to heaven. You will have to dig deeper to learn why someone is not growing as they should. When you learn the reason, then you need to address problem in a way that will most likely lead to success.

Does [Hebrews 10:25](#) Cover Bible Classes?

The primary assembly of the church, the one required by God, is our worship service on each Sunday. "*Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, ...*" ([Acts 20:7](#)). The word "church" comes from the Greek word for those who are called out. Therefore the phrase "come together" is an indication of the church assembling.

The primary assembly is the one done to partake of the Lord's Supper. Paul talks at length about the Lord's Supper in I Corinthians 11 and speaks of the time "*when you come together as a church*" ([1 Corinthians 11:18](#)). It was "*when you come together in one place*" ([1 Corinthians 11:20](#)) that Christians are supposed to partake of the Lord's Supper.

However, it is not the only thing done as an assembly. I Corinthians 14 speaks of the edification that is to take place in the church services and again it is addressed as when "*the whole church comes together in one place*" ([1 Corinthians 14:23](#)). "*Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification*" ([1 Corinthians 14:26](#)).

The word "assembling" in [Hebrews 10:25](#) comes from a Greek word meaning a complete collection. In other words, it would refer to the calling out of the whole church to gather in one place. This certainly describes the worship service on Sunday, but it doesn't describe the mid-week Bible studies. While the

church offers classes, the whole church is rarely gathered together nor is it gathered for the purpose of offering worship to God. If it was so, then the rule for women not speaking in [I Corinthians 14:34-35](#) must apply. In other words, times designated by the church as convenient times to study together are not assemblies. They are allowed as times of edification ([Ephesians 4:11-16](#)), but they are not formal assemblies of the whole church.