

1“Don’t Forsake Assembling Together” – Part 1 (Pastor Steven Hiltz)

Hebrews 10:23-25 – *“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.**”*

True Story: A Church goer in England wrote a letter to the editor of a British newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday.

"I've gone and done it for 30 long 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 preachers are wasting theirs too by giving lengthy 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!"

I have observed an ever increasing and may I say, unhealthy and disturbing trend in conservative, evangelical Christendom over the past number of years. I have gotten a closer look at it in the last year and a half here at FBC, with a real heaviness of heart, I might add!

It is that trend of seeing professing believers not making the regular gathering together for *worship, instruction and fellowship* on a weekly basis, a high priority in their lives.

It seems to be something that's treated as not being very important, as not being imperative and something that is maybe a "5" on a scale of 1-10 of their week's things that - *"I just simply can't do without."* So many other things seem to have urgency and preference over coming together as the Lord has told us to do.

It *"seems"* like, if **one** child or adult has to stay home for something, it is then a valid reason for **everyone** to stay home from the gathering of the believers that day! Or if one person needs a ride to work on Sunday, then it seems like the decision is, *"We'll all stay home as a family this week and hopefully the schedule will allow for church attendance next week or the next.....maybe!"*

As I mentioned a couple of weeks ago, it's as if the mindset is - *"Well, if I miss the **morning** service. Oh well, maybe I'll make it out next Sunday morning...."*

Here's a **"Breaking News Alert"** – There are other church services and gatherings each week at FBC. If you do miss the Sunday a.m. service for some reason *and there are legitimate reasons*, we do gather together at 7:00 p.m. Sunday evenings each week. The Lord's people are still there, the word is still preached (not the same message as the morning!), hymns and choruses are still sung, offering is still taken up, special music and offertories are still sung and played and people still welcome one another. It is often more relaxed, with greater variety in what we do and we

often have a sharing / testimony time to boot! God blesses in the evening just as much as He does in the morning!

We also have a gathering of believer's on Wed. evenings at 7:00p.m at the Chapel. (*Yeah, but I'm soooo tired some say. Yes and so am I sometimes?*)

If you do have to work all day Sunday, I believe they usually let you off in time that you COULD make it out on Sunday evening if you really planned it properly (you could take a change of clothes if you had to, you could wait to eat afterwards, and you can nod through the message if you have to! :-), but if not, the gathering together of the saints is so important that you should get out on Wednesday evening. No one will force you to pray out loud, if that is your concern.

I find it's all relative, really, this matter of making it out to a service or services. *We could if we would!*

Ask yourself the questions: *Would I be too tired to go shopping? To go to the movies? To tackle my hobby or to play my Sport?* These things all may have their place and some of them need to be done but the gathering together of believer's needs to take precedent over any of those things.

Hey, did you know there is even a gathering for the Ladies on Thurs. at 1:30 p.m. for sharing, prayer and loving accountability and growth purposes and for Men on Friday's at 6:45-7:30 a.m?

I think that, when all of the reasons or excuses are analyzed, you will find they all boil down to one word, "**priority**". Everyone has a list of priorities that governs their actions, but many people have not considered what their priorities are. Consciously sit down please and really think about that for a moment....

Here's an example of making church attendance a priority within our own assembly of believers. Walter Goliath has to do night shifts as an RCMP officer. I know that many times he has finished his night shift and has still come out for SS and church in the morning, because he wants his impressionable young family to know that meeting together for worship, fellowship and instruction with other believers is a high priority. Is he tired? I am sure he is most times. He may even nod, I don't know and it really doesn't matter to me if he does! I am sure that when those boys grow up they'll know by example that attendance at church takes precedent over most things. Obviously there are legitimate excuses for not being there; we all know and understand that. The sad thing is that what we are increasingly considering *reasonable* has broadened greatly. Surely, there has been an eroding to our commitment to *meeting together* as a whole.

One thing I believe to be true whether I personally like to admit it or not, ***I always have time for what I truly and personally believe is the most important thing in my life.*** I'm sure you do too!

It is clearly evident that we all can find the *simplest reasons* not to be in church sometimes; excuses that the vast majority of the time would never keep us from others things we deem to be important to us, like our paid work each day, our kid's sports games, golf, the beach trips, our own pleasure trips, shopping excursions or the movies!

If you sense I feel exercised by this subject, then you're right! I am! As one of the spiritual leaders here who "*watch for your souls*" as Hebrew 10 says, I am concerned for a good number of our folks who come sporadically or hardly at all.

By the way, next week is dedicated to - "**Missing Church Attendees**" (Some of these I borrowed, some I modified and some are original.)

To make it possible for everyone to attend church next Sunday, we are going to have a special "**No Excuse Sunday**" therefore –

Cots will be placed in the foyer for those who say, "*Sunday is my only day to sleep in.*"

There will be a special section with lazy boy chairs for those who feel that our chairs are too hard.

Eye drops will be available for those with tired eyes from watching TV late Saturday night.

For those who habitually oversleep, preset alarm clocks will arrive at your home by courier on Saturday and placed on your night tables at no extra charge!

Radios and TVs will be installed on the back of the seat ahead of you for those who prefer that avenue of preaching and service delivery.

We'll have steel helmets for those who say, "*The roof would cave in if I ever came to church.*"

Blankets will be furnished for those who think the church is too cold, and fans for those who say it is too hot.

Scorecards will be available for those who wish to list all the hypocrites present.

All Relatives and Friends will be in attendance for those who can't go to church and cook dinner, too.

We will distribute "*Stamp Out Stewardship*" buttons for those that feel the church is always asking for money.

One section will be devoted to trees and grass for those who like to seek God in nature.

Doctors, nurses, pharmacists and naturopaths will be in attendance with flu shots, Echinacea, Cold FX and "eye of newt" for those who say, "*I think I'm starting to come down with something.*"

For those who have nothing to wear, a mobile clothing store will be here in the yard by 9 a.m.

The sanctuary will be decorated with both Christmas poinsettias and Easter lilies for those who never have seen the church without them.

A pound of intestinal fortitude will be given out to those who have a hard time providing leadership to their families.

We will provide hearing aids for those who can't hear the preacher and foam ear plugs for those who think he's too loud!

Pass the word along, we sincerely hope to see everyone there!

Now, some of you may get upset at me, but ask yourself the question honestly, "*Why am I upset?*" If what I am saying is not true of you, let any part of this exhortation run off you "like water of a duck's back." Really, please do so! I mean that sincerely. If it is true of you, then

consider before the One Whom you will stand before at the Judgment Seat as a son and steward, and ask the question - *“How can I change my priorities and do what my Saviour and Lord has called me to, as His child or as the spiritual leader in my home?”*

Those are really, really good questions as we proceed further, *“What has God called me to or instructed me to do in this area of gathering together for worship, instruction, fellowship and service?”*

Heb. 10:23 - *“Let us *hold fast the confession (profession) of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.”*

*Cling to the faith you profess, in other words.

My unsaved Dad would sincerely say of those who *“professed faith”* in Christ in our own little community, *“I hope they can live you to what they profess.”*

Don't turn away from your trust and profession of faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no acceptable sacrifice and payment for sins that God Almighty accepts outside of His dear Son's work. John 14:6 Acts 4:12

Don't turn away from the only One who can save your soul for all eternity!

Some of the “professing” Hebrews were in danger of doing just that!

At one point, many “professing” followers of Jesus “went back and walked with Him no more.” Jesus asked those closest to Him, *“Do you also want to go away?”* Peter spoke up and said, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”* John 6:60-69

Continuance in the faith in Christ one professes is a significant indicator of genuine salvation. Another sign of true salvation is the desire to be with fellow believers in God's house for fellowship, worship and to be under the instruction of the word of God. *What telltale sign does your life and attendance lean toward telling everyone?* This certainly doesn't mean that everyone who attends church regularly is saved or walking in obedience to Christ in all areas. I am not kidding myself or trying to kid anyone else either. It doesn't mean if someone is somewhat sporadic in their attendance or not attending now at all that they are not saved either. God alone truly knows the heart. We only get the indicators of fruit or lack thereof.

Heb. 3:12-14 *“Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. You must warn each other every day, while it is still “today,” so that none of you will be **deceived by sin** and **hardened against God**. For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.”* - NLT

v24 - *“And let us consider *one another in order to stir up love and good works”*

Is “us” singular or plural? “*Hey, it’s none of my business what other Christians do or don’t do!*” many Christians will say. *Oh, but yes, it is!* We, as believers, are the “us” in this verse!

The word “consider” means to perceive, mark, observe, understand; to consider attentively; to fix one’s eyes or mind upon. The word meaning shows how intently we are to look out for our fellow believers in Christ.

It is to take careful note of one another’s spiritual welfare.

That’s why my re-emphasis on the “one another’s” of the New Testament – “*exhort or encourage one another; bear one, love, bear with, admonish, greet, accept, serve one another....*”

To “*stir up*” in this verse means “*to incite, sharpen or stimulate as a direct result of provoking, irritation or contention*” - Vincent’s Word Studies

The first thing I do in the morning these days is to go to my woodstove and take the poker and push it in amongst the remaining coals from the night’s fire. I draw back and forth, poking and prodding and stirring up what is there to bring forward the live embers in order to help ignite more wood in order to give more heat, warmth and comfort. We need to do the same with one another. It is our responsibility *to stir up* love and good works. We’ve been told by our Lord to do it!

It surely is easy enough for any of us to stir up hatred, division, contention or bitterness.

It takes a bit more thought and effort to stir up love and good works. How are you doing in that department? How are you at accepting the stirring up when it does come to you?

Now, to our main text, verse 25 says - *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.*”

The following is verse 25 in a number of other Bible Translations –

NLT - *Let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.*

NIV - *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

NCV - *You should not stay away from the church meetings, as some are doing, but you should meet together and encourage each other. Do this even more as you see the day coming.*

CEV - *Some people have gotten out of the habit of meeting for worship, but we must not do that. We should keep on encouraging each other, especially since you know that the day of the Lord's coming is getting closer.*

This exhortation found here in verse 25 will start to show us how we can begin to accomplish the feat of *stirring to love and good works*.

The **positive manner** will be “**encouraging one another*” (*to comfort, to console, to arouse to action, to come alongside of)

Prov. 27:17 – “*As iron sharpens iron so a man sharpens the countenance (face) of his friend.*” or other translations say – we can “*improve each other*” or “*sharpen the minds of*” our friends.

As I stay in closer relationship with many brothers here at the Chapel, whether it be through “*house to house*” fellowship, small group meetings, Men’s Breakfasts or the regular services, I am sharpened and stirred by them in relation to my walk with Christ and obedience to His commands. I need that close contact and they no doubt benefit from mine. The farther I get away from fellowship with my brothers and sisters the farther I get away from fellowship with my Lord, I find. I may not like to admit that but there is a direct correlation.

The **negative aspect** to be avoided is “*not to *forsake the assembling of ourselves together...*”

*forsaking – In the Greek it was a severe word meaning “*to abandon, desert or to leave behind.*”

This is speaking of more than just inconsistency. The Lord, of course, wants us to be steadfast or consistent in all things. 1 Cor. 15:58

Our local church desperately needs consistency for the work of the Lord, the witness of the church, the encouragement and example factor to younger believers and younger children/teens and also for the support of God’s work financially, here and abroad.

One guy, who claimed to be a believer and former member of a Baptist church, said to one Pastor, “*I haven't attended church regularly for many years.*” He said he had become a church member when he was a child. He said he often thought about church attendance but had not gone. He was then asked the question: “*If the work of the Lord had depended on him, what would have happened to it over the years since he'd been in church?*” Of course, he had no answer.

Here’s one of my infrequent confessions: *Probably the most discouraging thing for me since returning to Pastor here has been the spiritual complacency and inconsistency of some, often reflected in sporadic church service attendance.*

Some professing believers may even come to a point where they say, “*I don't care; I'm not going back to church.*”

Let me say this, if they are true believers, God will lovingly chastise or correct them. They cannot be content when they are not in fellowship with other believers and gathering as the Lord desires us to do. There will be no joy and peace, no rest in their spirit until they return to fellowship with the Saviour, and fellowship with the saints of God.

William MacDonald - *“Without question we find strength, comfort, nourishment, and joy in collective worship and service.”*

One aspect of this exhortation was that *“forsaking assembling together”* was the danger of turning one’s back on Christianity and reverting back to Judaism and therefore not really trusting in Christ alone for salvation. Some of these “professing” Jewish folks the writer of Hebrews was writing to were in danger of this.

Since we will *“know them by their fruits,”* we all had better allow the Spirit of God to reveal to us what kind of fruit is being manifested in our lives. For *“not all that say unto me, Lord, Lord, will enter into heaven but he that does the will of My Father.”*

This refers to much more than regular church attendance we know, but that is one aspect or indication of true spiritual life and certainly of ***love and obedience*** to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

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Top Ten Excuses For Avoiding Church Services

Many people have an excuse for ***not attending*** church services each week. If you were to take those excuses and apply them to other things we do (**for example -- eating**), those excuses might look like this:

10. I was forced to eat as a child.
9. People who eat all the time are hypocrites; they aren't really hungry.
8. There are so many different kinds of food; I can't decide what to eat.
7. I used to eat, but I got bored and stopped.
6. I only eat on special occasions, *like Christmas and Easter.*
5. None of my friends will eat with me.
4. I'll start eating when I get older.
3. I don't really have time to eat.
2. I don't believe that eating does anybody any good. It's just a crutch.

And the # 1 excuse for not eating....

1. Restaurants and grocery stores are only after your money.

assembling - It properly means *an act of assembling, or a gathering together.*

1. This Greek word is only found here and in 2 Thess. 2:1 – where it is translated *“gathering together”*)

2. The command, then, here is, *to meet together* for the worship of God, and it is *enjoined on Christians as an important duty to do it. It is *implied*, also, that there is **blame or fault** where this is "neglected." —Barnes' Notes on the New Testament (*an urgent admonition)

of ourselves together - that is, for the purpose of public worship

Matt. 18:20 – “*For where two or three are **gathered** (collected or assembled) together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*”

I made a random visit to Harbour View Haven last week and sat in on their “*morning devotions*” they gather for each day and I reminded them, “*where two or three are gathered together in My Name, I am there in the midst of them.*”

as is the *manner of some -

Manner (Greek word, ethos) – “*habit, custom or be accustomed to*”

Question: How is a **custom or habit** formed? *By doing the same thing over and over again.*
Does it get easier the more you practice a habit or custom? **OH! YES!**

A Very Plausible Scenario for Illustration’s sake:

You **miss a Sunday** for a very legitimate - the roads in your area are very slippery or you have a bad cold/flu. Oh, by the way – *If one driver has a cold, that doesn’t mean the rest of the family is automatically quarantined!*

The **next week**, you’re feeling waaay down; you’ve had a major “*not speaking to one another husband & wife argument*” from Thurs. – Sat. night all inclusive and you have that - “*I simply can’t force a smile and fake the handshake thing*” Sunday morning feeling, so you stay home again.

The **next week** you’ve **partially** made up so you feel you should “*get away*” together and so you skip church and go to the Home Show in Hfx. because it’s only once a year, you know and besides, it’ll help the relationship!

Then the **next week** you say, “*Hey, I’ve been gone 3 weeks, I kinda like this ‘day of rest’ thing, literally!*” I can sleep in!
And then you may say, “Hey, you know what? No one even called to see if I was ok. I don’t think I matter to anyone there....I’m not fussy about going back there or anywhere for that matter!”

You may laugh at my little scenario, but you can see how easy it is for **one or two** missed Sundays to become **three and four** and then it becomes - **a custom or habit!**

Observation: *How hard it is to unseat or change an ingrained habit once it’s established?*

(Think of overeating or eating the wrong things or a sedentary lifestyle and the challenge those habits provide us!)

AT Robertson – “*Already some Christians had **formed the habit** of not attending public worship, a perilous habit then and now.*”

I go back to the “*ember from the fire*” illustration I’ve used in the past. You may have a nice roaring fire which gives lots of heat, warmth and light but then if you were to take one ember from the fire and set it off on the hearth by itself it does not take long for the **warmth, heat and light** to die out. If instead you keep the same ember with the rest of the embers there is a much brighter and longer lasting source of heat and light!

Bible Commentator Adam Clarke said about these Hebrews – “*They had given up these strengthening and instructive means, and the others were in danger of following their example.*”

Even though we know before God it holds no water, we subconsciously are affected to some degree by the actions of those around us.

- “*Well, they don’t come very regularly; I think I’ll stay away more.*”

Someone said - “*If absence makes the heart grow fonder, some people ought to love their church greatly.*”

- “*So and so doesn’t come out for SS, Sunday evenings or Wed. anymore – I think I’ll cross those “extra” meetings off my list too.*”

KJV Parallel Commentary - “*The assembling of the believers is often an outward indication of the inner condition. **If a man’s faith will not get him to church, it is doubtful if it will get him to heaven.** Further, the importance of assembling is both subjective and objective. It benefits the individual with spiritual stability and growth. It benefits objectively by its positive effect on others. The church meeting is far more than a place for one to be entertained or to hear, for these can be accomplished through radio or television. The purpose for the assembling is for participation in worship and fellowship and with one another. Attendance is necessary. The church is a body interacting, not merely a granary for dispensing food. The assembling of the believers is one measure that indicates the condition of the heart. Thus, the author (of Hebrews) encourages the readers not to desert the assembly.¹*”

Here in Hebrews - We are not told **why** they stopped gathering together, **simply that they did.**

It’s been suggested that some of the following may have been the reasons; although the writer of Hebrews doesn’t allow for any excuse in not assembling together! It is our sacred duty and we are bound by obedience to the clear instruction of scripture “**not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together...**”

Suggestions by AT Barnes:

1KJV Bible commentary. 1997, c1994 (electronic ed.) (2566). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

1. Some may have been deterred by the fear of persecution, as those who were assembling regularly and openly would be more exposed to danger.

2. Some may have neglected the duty because they felt no interest in it – *as professing Christians now sometimes do*.

3. It is possible that some may have had doubts about the necessity of doing so, and on that account may have neglected it.

4. Or it may perhaps have been that some may have neglected it for a cause which now sometimes is proposed, such as dissatisfaction with a pastor/preacher, or with some member or members of the church, or with something else in the church.

- Whatever the reasons, the writer says that Christians should regard it as a sacred duty to meet together for the worship of God. ***None of the causes above suggested should deter true believers from this duty.***

- With all who bear Christ's name (a serious responsibility), with all who expect to "grow in knowledge and grace," serve and properly obey the "one another's" of the NT, it should be regarded as a ***high responsibility*** to assemble together for public worship.

John 14:15 – "If you love Me, ****keep my commandments***" **Does it say, "If you feel like it? If it's convenient! If it doesn't interfere with something else you want to do? No, No, No!"**

True Christianity is born out of relationship – being rightly related to God *by grace through faith* (Eph. 2:8) in His Son Jesus Christ and His atoning work on Calvary's cross. It is living out of the reality of relation to one another, as we have been mutually born into God's family ***through Jesus' shed blood!***

AT Barnes - "There is an obvious propriety that men should assemble together for the worship of the Most High, and no Christian can hope that his graces will grow, or that he can perform his duty to his Maker, without uniting thus with those who love the service of God."

but exhorting – "warning, urging, and encouraging"

It's been suggested that when the believers met together that this was an integral part of their meeting together, the ***warning, urging*** and ***encouraging*** factor!

If all of us would be more *open, honest, transparent, humble, teachable* and *willing to receive this* from "one another," how much more balanced and useful as individual believers and as a local church would we be?

It would need to be shared with grace and love of course! I would hazard a guess that if we ever did that, 3/4 of us would not be able to handle it, and there'd be a ***mass exodus*** from the Chapel.

one another – Gr. – *allelon* - it's reciprocal; it's complementary, it is corresponding to each other

1. This mutual, reciprocal action is **nearly impossible** without getting together or *gathering in some manner*.

2. This assembling of the believers on at least a weekly basis for, "*doctrine, fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers*" together is God's design for us. Acts 2:42

This fellowship was in the temple, and from "house to house" through church history and has always continued from "*house to house*" to some degree.

They also assembled in larger gathering places, such as halls and "*church*" buildings. This began to happen around 300 A.D. church historians tell us.

And so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Exhorting here also implies an urgency in light of the coming events; the Day approaching!

It referred to a period when **something remarkable** was going to happen, some have suggested the day when Jerusalem would be destroyed and the sacrifices would cease but many others believe it refers to The Day of Christ's Second Coming when He will put down His enemies and set up His kingdom on this earth of which, "*there will be no end.*"

This **looking forward to** Christ's coming and hence the Judgment Seat for believers and the Rapture of the church should have us seriously considering **our character** and **our conduct**, in light of those events.

1 John 3:3 - "*He that has this hope in him purifies himself even as He is pure.*"

King David said, "*I was glad when they said unto me; 'Let us go up to the house of the Lord.'*" - Psalm 122:1

Glad – "*to rejoice, to be affected with joy and delight*"

William MacDonald – "*It was no burdensome duty or dreary routine. In going to the temple to worship he found fulfillment and gladness.*"

Yes, we can worship anywhere. The OT saints did it at individual *altars of sacrifice*, then the *Tabernacle*, and then the *Temple*.

BUT now the focal point is the gathering of the local body of believers, as we come together with one mind and one spirit to honor and glorify our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, through instruction in "doctrine, fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers."

KJV Parallel Commentary – "*The heart that delights in worship of God will always delight in the place appointed for worship.*"

Reasons *why we should gather or assemble together as a Local Church:*

- It was established by God and He preserved it, so He must think that it is valuable. *The local gathering of believers is a microcosm of the Universal Church.*

- It is a visible tangible expression of our love for God

- It is a way to build up our spiritual strength, through the instruction of the word God and fellowship.

Dr. John F. MacArthur - *"It is only in the local body to which one is committed that there can be the level of intimacy that is required for carefully stimulating fellow-believers 'to love and good deeds.' And it is only in this setting that we can encourage one another."*

- It provides an avenue of concentrated fellowship with those of like precious faith, that are journeying on the same narrow road.

- It is an act of obedience

- It honors the Lord's Day

- If the church is to continue to grow and expand, there needs to be committed regulars to "carry the baton," *as it were.*

- The unbeliever looks at a professing Christian's life and they partially *examine or judge* the seriousness of our profession by our attendance at church.

- It is often a safe refuge for the discouraged, hurting and fallen. *(It is a hospital for the sick and recovering, not a display case for perfect people!)*

- It's a classroom for spiritual development.

D. L. Moody - *"Church attendance is as vital to a disciple as a transfusion of rich, healthy blood to a sick man."*

Poem – *"A Church That's All it Ought to Be"*

I think that I shall never see a church that's all it ought to be:

A church whose members never stray beyond the strait and narrow way:

A church that has no empty pews, whose Pastor never has the blues,

A church whose deacons always deak, and none is proud, and all are meek:

Where gossips never peddle lies, or make complaints or criticize;

Where all are always sweet and kind, and all to others faults are blind.

Such perfect churches there may be, but none of them are known to me.

But still, we'll work, and pray and plan, to make our own the best we can.

From *Wesley's Christian Advocate* a Question: *Can't I'd be a Christian without joining myself to a church?*

Answer: Yes, it is possible. *It is something like being:*

A student who will not go to school.

A soldier who will not join an army.

A citizen who does not pay taxes or vote.

A salesman with no customers.

An explorer with no base camp.

A seaman on a ship without a crew.

A businessman on a deserted island.

An author without readers.

The tuba player without an orchestra.

A parent without a family.

A football player without a team.

A politician who is a hermit.

A scientist who does not share his findings.

A bee without a hive.

Concluding Questions: *Will I make it a priority or will I make excuses?*

How will I show that this matter of “*assembling together*” is a sacred duty, blessed *privilege and responsibility* - for me, for my family and the cloud of witnesses watching me?