

Stay at Home or Attend? - 18 Questions about Attendance

These are questions regarding attending the meetings arranged by a local church for the benefit of the members, especially the Bible classes, Sunday evening assembly, and mid-week meeting. The focus here is not on people who miss for obviously legitimate reasons such as sickness, but on those who really could come but deliberately and repeatedly miss because they do not think it is necessary to come or they simply choose not to. (To really benefit from the questions, you need to read the passages listed.)

1. Should a Christian try to do as much as he can to please God or try to seek minimal service and avoid opportunities to do God's will? (1 Cor. 15:58; Titus 2:14; Gal. 6:10; Matt. 22:36-38; John 14:15; 2 Cor. 8:5; Rev. 3:15-16)

2. Would Jesus attend as often as He could, or would He choose to stay home when He could go? Are we following His example if we stay home? (Luke 4:16; Matt. 15:32; Mark 10:1; 1 Peter 2:21-22; Phil. 2:3-8; 1 John 2:6)

3. Are we studying the word and growing in knowledge as diligently as we should when we attend or when we refuse to attend? (Psalm 1:1-2; Prov. 2:1-12; Matt. 5:6; Acts 17:11; Heb. 3:12-14)

4. Are we doing our best to edify and encourage others when we attend or when we stay home? (Rom. 14:19; 15:14; 1 Thess. 5:11; 1 Cor. 14:26; 2 Tim. 2:2)

5. Do we show a sincere devotion to giving thanks and praise to God for all His great gifts to us when we stay home or when we come? (John 4:23-24; Luke 24:52-53; Acts 2:42; Heb. 13:15; 1 Peter 2:5, 9-10; Psalm 95:1-3; 122:1; Rev. 19:1, 4-6; Rom. 1:21)

6. When our brethren in Christ assemble with one accord to worship God, do we manifest sincere oneness of heart and soul with them when we stay home or when we attend? (Acts 1:14; 4:24, 32; Phil. 1:27; 2:1-4; Eph. 4:2-3; Rom. 15:5-6)

7. Which member will demonstrate the greatest commitment to cooperating in the work of the church, working diligently and serving his brethren: the member who has the desire to stay home or the member who desires to attend? (Acts 2:42; 9:26-29; Eph. 4:16; Gal. 4:13; 6:2)

8. When God's ordained leaders have arranged times for the members to study and be edified, is a member showing respect for these leaders when he comes or when he stays home? (Acts 14:23; 1 Peter 5:1-2, 5; Heb. 13:17; 1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:11-12; Eph. 5:21)

9. Do we imitate the example of faithful men of God when we attend or when we stay home? (Phil. 3:17; 4:9; 1 Peter 5:3; Heb. 6:11-12; 13:7)

10. Who sets the best example for the new converts, weak members, and children: the member who comes or the member who does not? (Matt. 18:6-7; 5:13-16; 1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 1:5)

11. Who is being a diligent parent and/or head of the family, training the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: the father or mother who brings their children to services, or ones who keep them home? (Eph. 6:4; Prov. 22:6)

12. Are we truly putting God first in life and abounding in the work when we stay home or when we come? (Matt. 22:36-38; John 14:15; 2 Cor. 8:5; 1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 3:15-16)

13. Are we sacrificing ourselves for the cause of Christ, like He sacrificed Himself for us, when we stay home or when we come? (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph 5:2; Heb. 12:2; Matt. 16:24-25; 1 Peter 2:5; Heb. 13:15; Mal. 1:6-8, 13-14)

14. Do we grow, increase, and improve in strength and service to God best when we attend or when we do not? (Eph. 4:11-16; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 Peter 2:2; Rom. 1:12; 1 Thess. 4:18; 5:11; Heb. 10:23-25)

15. When a member attends fewer and fewer meetings as time goes by, is he growing in God's service or drifting away? (see Heb. 2:1-3 and the verses above)

16. Are the meetings of the church a good use of our time and an opportunity to do good or not? (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 5:16; Titus 2:14)

17. Do we please God best when we resist the efforts of brethren to teach and encourage us to improve our attendance or when we appreciate those efforts? (Rev. 3:19; Gal. 6:1-2; James 5:19-20; 2 Tim. 4:2-4; Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15-17; Prov. 15:31-32; 13:18; 18:13; 10:17; 29:1; 19:20; 1 Peter 3:15; John 3:19-21)

18. And, who is truly a faithful, mature Christian: the man who refuses to come to all the services unless someone can show him a specific passage that says he is going to hell if he doesn't come, or the person who understands general Bible teaching and loves God enough that he wants to come and worship Him? (Heb 5:12-14)

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord'" (Psalm 122:1).

- via Rogers Reflector

Lord, Please Help Me to Submit

The ability to submit is vital to our eternal salvation. Surely all serious Bible students understand the essential need to "submit yourselves therefore to God" (James 4:7). Rebellion against Him will certainly lead to damnation.

But there is another area where submission is also necessary – in our relationships with one another. In fact, this willingness to submit to each other is an indirect form of submission to God (Colossians 3:22-24). Sadly, too many Christians fail in this crucial area.

Understand, of course, that we are not discussing areas where truth and righteousness are involved. In those matters we ought not to yield or compromise at all. When Paul was confronted by false teachers he "gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour" (Galatians 2:5). Thus, the only area wherein submission to one another is possible and necessary is in judgment, opinion, and expediency.

But in these judgment matters, unfortunately, some are determined to have their way – and at all cost! It seems that it does not register on their 'radar' that their stubborn argumentation and consistent griping and complaining is so terribly detrimental to peace and unity. They are doggedly insistent on things being done their way and to their liking – or else!!! Many congregations have been torn asunder by these folks. They may not realize it, but their conduct puts them squarely in the corner of their forerunner Diotrephes (3 John 9,10).

A consistent plea throughout the restoration movement was: "In matters of faith, unity; in matters of opinion, liberty; in all things, love." That statement clearly sets forth the worthy principles of devotion and commitment to truth, and humble submission in matters of opinion and judgment. Let us all observe these godly concepts. And let us be especially mindful of the need for submission. Think!

- by Greg Gwin