

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Some Questions About Attending Church Services

By David Pratte

These are some questions regarding attendance at meetings especially Bible class, Sunday evening assembly, and the midweek service, arranged by the local church for the benefit of the members. Our focus is not on those who miss for obviously legitimate reasons, such as sickness, but on those who deliberately and repeatedly choose to stay at home because they do not think it is necessary to be there. To really benefit from this study, you need to read the passages offered for each question.

Should Christians try to do as much as possible to please God, or seek to do minimal service and to avoid opportunities to do God’s will? (1 Cor. 15:58; Titus 2:14; Gal. 6:10; Matt. 22:36-38; Jn. 14:15; 2 Cor. 8:5; Rev. 3:15, 16)

Would Jesus attend as often as He could, or would He choose to stay home when He could go? Are we following His example when we stay home? (Lk. 4:14; Matt. 15:32; Mk. 10:1; 1 Pet. 1:21, 22; Phil. 2:3-8; 1 Jn. 2:6)

When are we studying the word and growing in knowledge as diligently as we should—when we attend, or when we stay home? (Psa. 1:1, 2; Prov. 2:1-12; Matt. 5:6; Acts 17:11; Heb. 3:12-14)

When do we do 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)

When do we show sincere devotion to giving God thanks and praise for His great gifts to us—when we stay home, or when we attend? (Jn. 4:23, 24; Lk. 24:52, 53; Acts 2:42; Heb. 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:5-10; Psa. 95:1-3; 122:1; Rev. 19:1-6)

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 at home or when we attend? (Acts 1:14; 4:24, 32; Phil. 1:17; 2:1-4; Eph. 4:2, 3; Rom. 15:5, 6)

Which member demonstrates the greater commitment to cooperating in the work of the church, working diligently, and serving his brethren—the member who desires to stay home, or the member who desires to attend? (Acts 2:42; 9:26-29; Eph. 4:16; Gal. 5:13; 6:2)

When God’s ordained leaders arrange times for members to study and receive edification, do the members show respect for these leaders by attending, or by staying home? (Acts 14:23; 1 Pet. 5:1-5; Heb. 13:17; 1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:11, 12; Eph. 5:21)

When do we imitate the examples of faithful men of God who lived before us—when we attend, or when we stay home? (Phil. 3:17; 4:9; 1 Pet. 5:3; Heb. 6:11, 12; 13:7)

Who sets the best example for new converts, weak members, and children—the member who attends, or the one who stays home? (Matt. 18:6, 7; 5:13-16; 1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 1:5)

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 keeps the children at home, or the father or mother who brings the children to the services? (Eph. 6:4; Prov. 22:6)

Do we truly put God first in our lives and abound in the work of the Lord when we stay home, or when we attend the services? (Matt. 22:36-38; Jn. 14:15; 1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 3:15, 16)

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

When do we sacrifice ourselves for the cause of Christ, as He sacrificed Himself for us—when we stay home, or when we attend? (Rom. 12:1, 2; Eph. 5:2; Heb. 12:2; Matt. 16:24, 25; 1 Pet. 2:5; Heb. 13:15; Mal. 1:6-8, 13, 14)

When, as time goes by, a member attends fewer and fewer meetings, does he grow in God's service or slowly drift away from God? (Heb. 2:1-3)

Is a church meeting a good use of my time and an opportunity to accomplish good? (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 5:16; Titus 2:14)

When is God more pleased—when we resist the efforts of brethren who teach and who encourage us to improve our attendance, or when we appreciate those efforts? (Rev. 3:19; Gal. 6:1, 2; Jas. 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 Pet. 3:15; Jn. 3:19-21)

And, who is truly a faithful, mature Christian—the man who refuses to attend all the services unless someone can show him a specific passage that says he is going to hell if he doesn't, or the one who understands general Bible teaching and loves God enough that he wants to come to worship Him? (Heb. 5:12-14; 2 Tim. 2:15) ■

Marital Faithfulness

By Steve Klein

A recent report revealed that “thirty-five percent of the people who use personal ads for dating are already married?” For years we've preached against and bemoaned the high rate of divorce in this country. But divorce doesn't just happen. There are any number of attitudes and actions that lead up to it. Wrong attitudes toward God, toward spouses, and toward the institution of marriage itself lead to foolish and harmful actions that destroy homes and condemn souls.

God created the institution of marriage. It is He who joins man and woman together in the bonds of matrimony, and He intends for them to stay that way until separated by death (Rom. 7:2). Jesus said that man is not to separate what God has joined together (Matt. 19:6). In Malachi 2:16, God literally says that He *“hates divorce.”* Any married person with an ounce of respect for God and His will, will not take out a personal ad for a date or engage in any other activity that could lead to a divorce. It's a matter of having the right attitude toward God.

It is also a matter of having the right attitude toward one's spouse. Spouses are to be loved, honored and cherished. A husband who is enraptured with the love of his spouse will not *“be enraptured by an immoral woman”* (Prov. 5:19-20). He will honor his wife as the weaker vessel and cherish her as he does his own flesh (1 Pet. 3:7; Eph. 5:28-29). The wife who loves her husband will *“see that she respects”* him (Eph. 6:23). *“An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who causes shame is like rotteness in his bones”* (Prov. 12:4). This mutual love and respect between marriage partners leaves no room for activities which bring pain, shame and dishonor to one's spouse. Simply put, divorce and its painful consequences are often the result of being unfaithful to God and to one's spouse. Truly, *“the way of the unfaithful is hard”* (Prov. 13:15, NKJV).
– *Collegevue church of Christ Bulletin*, July 22, 2018. ■

“21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord....25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:21, 22, 25).

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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