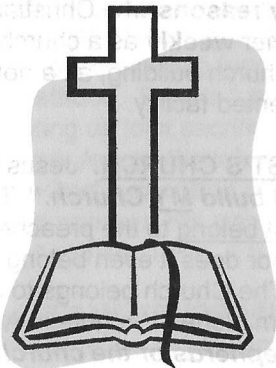


WHY WE ASSEMBLE TOGETHER!

WHY WE ASSEMBLE TOGETHER!



A Strawberry Mountain View

"Unique - Challenging - Controversial!"



"Berry Good News!"

by:

Frederick L. Pattison

WHY WE ASSEMBLE TOGETHER!

Why is it important that Christians assemble together? Isn't it possible to worship God at home watching TV or listening to a radio preacher?

Christians need to regularly assemble together as a church because this is the New Testament premise. Some people ask what is meant by **"regular assembling?"** The New Testament admonition is **assembling weekly**, not a hit-and-miss fashion or when, *"I feel like it."* There are **many reasons** why Christians should assemble together **weekly** as a church whether in a dedicated church building, as a house church or in a rented facility.

❖ **IT IS CHRIST'S CHURCH.** Jesus told his disciples, **"I will build MY Church."** The Church does not belong to the preacher, the denomination, nor does it even belong to the congregation. The Church belongs to Jesus Christ and to Him alone! We note in Acts 20:28b, **"Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood."** Our Lord would not have shed his blood for the Church if he did not consider it important.

❖ **WHAT IS THE CHURCH?** The Church is the spiritual Body of Christ. It cannot be confined to any one sect or denomination. It expresses itself best in companies of believers that we refer to as local churches or ekklesias.

❖ **PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL.** The bottom line of the Gospel is found in 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Christ Jesus lived, died, was buried, rose from the grave and ascended back to the Father in heaven. In assembling together we are proclaiming our belief and faith in the Gospel of Christ.

❖ **ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER.** Unless we faithfully assemble with our local church, it is impossible to carry out the Scriptural admonition of encouraging one another. The people of God encouraging each other should be exhibited whenever congregations assemble together. See - Hebrews 10:24-25.

❖ **CHALLENGING EACH OTHER.** Heb. 10:23 exhorts, **"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful."** And what is this hope? It is the Gospel. When we are not regularly assembling with our Christian family we become easily **sidetracked** by tangent issues and by personal 'pet' interpretations of Scripture that deter. It is easy for those who neglect assembling together to get caught up in this syndrome to the point of believing that they alone have the only correct understanding of God's Word. The apostle Paul warned, **"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons [false religion]. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them" (1 Tim. 4:1, 16).** When we assemble together we are challenged by the pastor and others to continue in sound teaching.

❖ **THE HOLY SPIRIT.** As followers of Christ we were added to the Church by the Holy Spirit. **There are no lone ranger Christians!** We are part of each other. God has ordained that His work is to be done in and through local churches. Every believer in Christ is a vital part of the Body of Christ, **"The body is a unity, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you a part of it" (1 Cor. 12:12, 13, 27).**

❖ **COMMUNITY.** Churches have largely lost the New Testament concept of community. Our common ground is Christ. Though diverse, yet in Christ we are one! The Church, both the entire Body of Christ as well as the local assembly, belongs to God, **"To the church of God. . .to those sanctified [set apart] in Christ Jesus, and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ - their Lord and ours" (1 Cor. 1:2).** Community is not possible when we remain separate from each other. Community is only possible as we view one another as members of the same family; the family of God.

❖ **DISCIPLESHIP.** We are subject to Christ who is over the church. As disciples of our Lord we are called to love one another. Our Lord's exhortation remains in force, **"Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34b-35).**

Walking and worshipping together in love is only possible when we are banded and bonded together in a local church. As we faithfully assemble to corporately praise, worship, pray, celebrate and study, we demonstrate to an unbelieving world that they are Christ's disciples.

❖ **ACCOUNTABILITY.** We are called into accountability to God and to those whom God has placed over the church for spiritual oversight. See - Heb. 13:17 and 1 Tim. 5:17. Scriptural accountability encompasses **servant ministry** (Mark 10:42-45), **mutual submission** (Eph. 5:21) and **discipline** (Matt. 18:15,17; Gal. 6:1). When the Holy Spirit calls and places pastors, elders [overseers] and deacons in the church accountability is possible. No other body except the local church has Scriptural offices filled by people of God's choosing.

❖ **THE GREAT COMMISSION.** We dare not ignore our Lord's Commission. See - Matt. 28:18-20. It is the church that is called forth to evangelize, disciple, baptize and equip. See - Eph. 4:11-16.

❖ **SPIRITUAL GIFTS.** Spiritual gifts are not given for personal gain. Rather, they are given for the building up of the family of God. The Holy Spirit sovereignly gives a gift mix to each local church. See - 1 Corinthians chapters 12 through 14; Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:7, 11-12.

❖ **PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS.** Every authentic believer is a priest. Hence, every believer is expected to function as a member of this priesthood. Priests function best when they are offering up joint sacrifices of praise, ***"Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise - the fruit of lips that confess His name"*** (Heb. 13:15). See also Heb. 13:16; 1 Pet. 1:5, 9).

❖ **SACRAMENTS/ORDINANCES.** Whether the church refers to baptism and communion as "sacraments" or as "ordinances" is not the issue here. Christ commanded that these observances be faithfully and regularly observed by local companies of believers. See - Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-32.

❖ **HEALING.** Whenever one of our number is sick the Scriptures instruct thusly, ***"Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed"*** (James 5:14-16) NRSV. Healing ministry involves spiritual,

emotional and physical healing.

❖ **EXPECTATION.** We are cautioned against absenting themselves from assembling together, ***"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing"*** (Heb. 10:25). See also Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10a.

Every Lord's Day belongs to God! It is a special day of celebrating the bodily resurrection of our Lord ensuring our eternal salvation.

Every believer should faithfully assemble with fellow believers to worship, praise, pray, celebrate, and to be further equipped in and through the holy Scriptures. There are few reasons for absenting oneself from the weekly assembling together other than real (not imagined) sickness, being out-of-town or employment.

An important biblical passage that every believer is called upon to heed is Heb. 10:24-25, ***"And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."***

If you are not regularly and faithfully assembling with a community of faith, you are encouraged to do some honest soul-searching to discover why you are disobeying the biblical exhortations on assembling together.

OLIVE TREE MINISTRIES
"Ambassadors of Reconciliation!"
HC 1, Box 1529
Strawberry, AZ 85544-9740

Copyright © MMI by Olive Tree Ministries
All Rights Reserved

Visit our Web Site at - www.olivetreeministry.com
Email - olivetree@cybertrails.com