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a Christian, and that church attendance does not necessarily reflect the kind of person one really is. No doubt simply going to church does not make one a Christian, and it is also true that the kind of person one truly is matters greatly. But these arguments are irrelevant, because God has commanded that those who would be pleasing to Him must meet together to worship Him. Jesus said, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). There is a “must” about worshipping Almighty God. If one does not do what God has commanded, he sins. Jesus also said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). Failure to worship with the church shows a lack of love for the Lord.

The Hebrew writer said, “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” (Hebrews 10:24–25). How can a Christian stir up love and good works—or be provoked to love and good works—when forsaking the assembling of God’s people?

Every member of the body is needed for the worship services. “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. . . . For in fact the body is not one member, but many” (1 Corinthians 12:12–14). The absentee misses the opportunity to join with other Christians in singing praises to God, offering corporate prayer, and giving to God as he has been prospered. He also misses the opportunity to learn from and benefit from the exhortations found in God’s word. Can anyone really say he is better off by not participating in the worship of the church? The willful absentee sins against the God of heaven, denies himself the blessings of God, and hurts the church, the bride of Christ.

Bob Prichard



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## **Is Church Attendance Really That Important? Isn't What Is in a Person's Heart More Important?**

The idea that church attendance is not very important would have seemed strange to first-century Christians. From the beginning of the church, they met together to worship God. Luke described the early church in Acts 2, saying that “they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (verse 42). “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (verses 46–47). Paul wrote, “How is it then, brethren? 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). Obviously, they loved and expected to come together.

Some argue, however, that just going to church does not make one

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