

Making the Most of the Assembly

The assembly of the saints for worship is the most prominent, public, collective activity of the church. What is said and done here has far reaching effect over the general condition of the congregation, and the congregations' influence in its community. The initial visit of a newcomer will be the most influential in their decision to seek a relationship, or continue searching. Will they feel welcome and important? Will they sit near someone who worships God, or near someone who fusses, fidgets participates minimally, or next to someone who's attention span is so short that he cannot remain in his seat for a thirty minute sermon? Are faithful members edified? Do they welcome persuasive teaching and rebuke, when necessary, as well as exhortation (2 Tim. 4:2)? Making the most of assemblies should be a top priority for every Christian. The following items of personal discipline may help to achieve that end.

Determine to be present (Mat. 18:20; Heb. 10:23-27) and enter the assembly with a positive attitude. Prayer before going, and prayerfully putting aside personality conflicts and personal preferences in matters of opinion will undoubtedly help. Resolve problems with personal sin, for one of the main reasons that some people "get nothing out of church" is unrepented sin. Whether a person is comforted or made uncomfortable by the word of God depends upon whether they are in sin, or in the light, for the same word that comforts the faithful will afflict the sinful (see Acts 2:37; 1 Thes. 4:18). Determine to listen and learn at least one thing from the message taught, rather than be distracted by good or bad feelings toward the speaker, his mannerisms, style, or oratory ability. Carry a familiar Bible and follow along in as the lesson is taught. Learn to take notes and attempt to isolate the main theme of the lesson as well as the major points. Participate in congregational singing whether you believe you can sing or not, for this is your opportunity to teach others and sing to the Lord (Col. 3:16). Make an effort to sit reverently and attentively, and try not to unnecessarily distract the attention of others. Come early and stay late; get to know your brothers and sisters. Identify and welcome visitors. Above all, be a "true worshipper" who will "...worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him (Jn. 4:23)." Our assembly is an important part of our walk with Christ, so let us endeavor to make the most out of them for ourselves and others.

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