

Your Obligation to the Church

5-12-13

According to Acts 2:47 when we are saved into Jesus Christ, we are added to His church. These events are near synonymous in occurrence; therefore, we need to understand that the church is necessary in our salvation.

Let us be clear that this is not a question of the church being equal to Christ. Our duty is to Christ above our duty to the church. We need to express this in terms of our efforts to convert: we convert the lost to Christ, not to the church. This is because we understand that Christ saves, not the church. But the church IS important to salvation

In becoming a Christian, we undertook an obligation to the church, and accepted an obligation from the church. Here is a comparison of those obligations:

What a Christian Owes the Church	What a Church Owes to the Christian
Personal Growth	Spiritual Development
Ability Development	Doctrinal Truth
Admonition	Admonition
Exhortation	Exhortation
Patience	Patience

Fundamental to these obligations is the physical presence that is required of us; often we express this as “going to church”. While it is an inexact phrase (we do not “go” to church, we “are” the church), we use it to describe certain obligations we have to the body of Christ. We use it to describe coming to Worship and take communion. We use it to describe meeting to study the Bible. Sometimes we use it simply to describe any getting together with other Christians.

Hebrews 10:23-26 is an important passage to consider in this study. Here we are told to “....consider one another in order to stir up love and good works”. The writer tells us how this is done: by “....not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together....”. Fundamentally, we are told here that our salvation is depending on our participation in the assembly of Christians, and that our motivation is by love for our brethren.

There is an easy way to determine if we are meeting these obligations. When we have an ignorance of church matters (we don’t know who is sick, when Bible classes are, who is traveling, etc), we are spiritually sick because of our unfulfilled obligations. Our non-participation in church works (such as Bible studies, evangelism efforts, etc), we are sick because our obligations are unfulfilled. When our worldly habits outweigh spiritual

habits (travel, work, hobbies etc are reasons why we are not assembling), we are in trouble. Even our words reflect our spiritual condition, when we speak about the church with terms such as “they” or “them” instead of “we” or “us”, this reflects our failed congregational obligations.

How many times have we heard: “I won’t go to hell for missing “church””? Consider that You won’t mature spiritually for missing “church” (For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 1 Corinthians 11:30), and that you will be lost if you cannot mature. You won’t go to heaven if you put God 2nd place, and missing the assembly is often just that. You won’t go to heaven if you don’t love brethren, and your love for your brethren is fundamental to your reasons for being with the assembly.

Finally, we need to know that God can tell the difference between a reason from an excuse. Too often we convince ourselves we are unable to assemble with Christians; we feel sick, tired or worn out. But is this an excuse for our absence? Particularly when we are still able to meet other obligations, or even to entertain or enjoy leisure activities? God is not deceived.

Assembly is not a matter of meeting a simple requirement; it is a reflection of the condition of our heart towards God and one another. Assembly is a measureable sign of Spiritual health and likelihood of eternal salvation. People who go to heaven are people who WANT to “go to church”.