

Attendance Matters **12-31-17 AM**

A sign on a school in Hillsboro Oregon read as follows: **Attendance Matters: 9 or Less is Best**. This is a theme that the public school adopted to encourage students to be in class. There are 165 days of school a year in Hillsboro, and the goal is not to miss more than 9. Why is this goal present? Because students who miss classes are more likely to either fail to progress as necessary or they will fall into the dropout category.

The church family has similar goals, so it is not surprise that the Word of God has a similar policy to the believer. Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. Hebrews 10:24-27

An important work of the church is encouraging each other to be present whenever possible. It is for growth, for strength, and to fulfill God's will. It may seem overly emphasized, but no more than within an education system. Those who fail to be present are more likely to fail to grow spiritually, or to drop out of the race altogether.

Why do Christians miss the assembly? Sometimes it is because we start to let other things get in the way (Mark 4:18-19). Sometimes we begin to think that it does not matter much; we become self-centered and decide that we are not being edified, and therefore there is no purpose to coming together. Maybe it is that something is said by the preacher or other members that hurt our feelings. Or maybe we simply have difficulties in our lives that dictate our presence (Mark 4:16-17). Whatever the cause, the results are the same. People who fall away in attendance fall away from Christ, and lose their salvation (2 Pet. 2:20, Heb. 2:3, 4:4-6).

Missing opportunities to assemble with other Christians is a choice. We need to remember when that choice arises certain things. First, that coming together enables spiritual growth in ourselves and others. Second, we ought to be worried that people who miss regularly fall away from Christ. Third, we need to remind ourselves that it hurts brethren when we choose to be away. Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, it is God's will that you gather with brethren (Acts 2:42-47). Finally, recognize that sometimes it will take sacrifices to fulfill the will of God (Acts 14:22).

Attendance matters. Even the world understands that without being present, nothing is gained, and ultimately everything is lost. Attendance is a choice. We must make the choice to be with the family of God.