

Getting the Most From The Assembly **01-12-20 AM**

Sometimes we refer to our assembly as a type of Spiritual Gym. Consider these words from the Apostle Paul: “Exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1 Timothy 4:7-8). This is a gym whose membership is both paid in full by the owner as well as paid by our participation. In a sense, we pay for this membership in the Gym with that most important and universal of currency, our time.

Our Gym has but one piece of equipment: the Word of God, with which we are equipped for every good work – 2 Timothy 3:17. This is a place to exercise our ability (Romans 12:6), and the evangelist serves like a personal trainer in the gym, instructing us on how to use the equipment for our betterment (2 Timothy 4:2). If you were a member of a gym as long as you have been a member of a church, what results do you expect? What results does Christ expect? Why does Jesus tell us through His messengers “*Do not forsake the assembly*” (Hebrews 10:26)?

First, let us be clear what the assembly is that we are not to forsake. We see several examples of an assembly, or coming together of the church. In 1 Corinthians 11-14 Paul describes a “coming together as the church” that surrounded the Lord’s Supper. It also included singing and praying (1 Corinthians 14:15). Another inferred example is found in Acts 2, where that first church came together for fellowship in the Apostle’s doctrine, breaking bread (the Lord’s Supper) and prayer. Finally, we see an assembly on the first day of the week in Acts 20, when disciples met for the main purpose of the Lord’s Supper. Thus, we conclude that the assembly of Hebrews 10:26 is that coming together of the church that centers on the Lord’s Supper and includes singing, praying, doctrine (and in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, the collection).

What was the impact or condition of these assemblies? That one in Acts 2:42-47 was one of both joy and fear that was marked with participation by all present. The assembly in Acts 20:7-12 saw a sad incident turned to joy when an accident took the life of a participant, and Paul restored him. Finally, in 1 Corinthians 11:17-27 we see an assembly fraught with problems. That assembly suffered with a lack of discernment, a lack of mindfulness to others, and the real danger of falling asleep (spiritually).

How can we get the most from the assembly? First we need to address our attitude. Arriving with the proper attitude is everything. We need to remember that the Assembly is more about HIM and THEM than ME (Psalm 122:1). Second, our investment will determine our reward. Membership should cost you something, as David taught in 1 Chronicles 21:24. Third, effectiveness is also what we do outside the assembly. How you behave outside the gym has a big impact on what you do in the gym. We need to use the equipment properly (2 Timothy 2:15). Understanding is also a big part of success. Knowing what, why and how of assembly, since there is NO edification without knowledge (1 Corinthians 14:17). Finally, we need to consider that success is related to our participation. All assembly actions are group actions (1 Corinthians 14:26).

Make the most of your Spiritual Gym membership. To do so, you need to understand the membership of the church and to understand the impact assembly can make. Finally, you need to be willing to make that impact greater.