

# A Closer Walk With God

## Our Public Assemblies

### Lesson #3

**TEXT:** Heb. 10:25

#### INTRODUCTION:

- A. THE ASSEMBLY IS A BLESSING AND RESPONSIBILITY.
- B. THE PURPOSE OF OUR ASSEMBLY IS THREE-FOLD:
  - 1. To express praise and devotion to God and Christ.
  - 2. To exhort and encourage our brethren to greater service( **Heb. 10:24-25** ).
  - 3. To receive such encouragement ourselves.
- C. IN THIS STUDY WE SHALL:
  - 1. Briefly describe the ACTIVITIES that we engage in during our assemblies.
  - 2. See how every activity is designed to accomplish the purpose described above.
  - 3. Suggest how we can get the most out of our public assemblies

#### I. THE ACTIVITIES OF OUR ASSEMBLIES.

- A. PRAYER.
  - 1. We have several examples of group prayer in the early church ( **Acts 4:23-24; 12:5, 12** ).
  - 2. The value of such prayer is implied in **James 5:16**.
  - 3. The value of all prayer is seen further in **Phil. 4:6-7**.
    - a. Thus prayer not only blesses (praises) God
    - b. But also blesses (benefits) those who pray!
  - 4. To get the most out of public prayers, make them your own! Say "AMEN!"
- B. SINGING.
  - 1. Commanded( **Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15** ).
  - 2. Notice where the emphasis lies:
    - a. On praising God.
    - b. On teaching one another.
    - c. On making melody "in your hearts."
  - 3. The emphasis is not on how we sound, but what we say and how we feel.
  - 4. To get more out singing in public, sing often in private!( **James 5:13** ).
- C. THE WORD OF GOD.
  - 1. Teaching was part of public worship in the early church( **Acts 20:7** ).
  - 2. For it is by the Word of God that we can grow spiritually( **1 Pet. 2:2** ).
  - 3. How we listen to the proclamation of God's Word is an indication of our devotion to God
    - a. We should be quick to hear what God's Word has to say( **Jas. 1:18-19** ).
    - b. It is important to receive God's Word with a proper attitude of meekness and willingness to receive it( **James 1:21; Mark 4:23-25** ).
  - 4. The more we study in private, the more we get out of it in public assemblies!
- D. THE LORD'S SUPPER.
  - 1. This is also called:
    - a. The "breaking of bread"( **Acts 2:42; 20:7** ).
    - b. "Communion"( **1 Cor. 10:16** ).
  - 2. A memorial feast instituted by Jesus Himself( **1 Cor. 11:23-26** ).
    - a. In it we remember:
      - 1) The sinless body offered on the cross in our place.
      - 2) The blood shed to provide forgiveness for our sins.
    - b. Done faithfully, we proclaim our faith in the efficacy of the Lord's death.
  - 3. It should be done with all seriousness and appropriateness( **1 Cor. 11:27-29** ).
    - a. In a manner worthy of the One we are remembering.
    - b. A time also to reflect upon our relationship with Him who died for us
  - 4. Done properly...
    - a. It honors Jesus ("This do, in remembrance of Me").
    - b. It renews us to greater faithfulness( **1 Cor. 11:28-32** ).
    - c. It strengthens our oneness in the body of Christ( **1 Cor. 10:17** ).
    - d. We share in the "body and blood of the Lord"( **1 Cor. 10:16** ).
  - 5. Reading passages like **Isaiah 53, Psalms 22**, and the Gospel records of Christ's suffering and death while partaking of the Supper can help keep our minds focused on what we are doing
- E. THE COLLECTION
  - 1. The early church noted for its love for one another( **Acts 2:44, 45; 4:32-35** ).

2. Such love went beyond those in the local congregation( **Acts 11:27-30** ).
3. In time, a systematic manner for providing for needy Christians was instituted ( **1 Cor. 16:1-2** ).
4. This passage serves as a pattern for the church in raising funds for any of its legitimate purposes, like supporting preachers( **2 Cor. 11:8,9; Phil. 4:10-18** ), and providing for teaching and worship essentials..
5. How much should one give? The New Testament does not set a percentage (like the "tithe", or a tenth, found in the Old Testament), but rather instructs us to give according to the following principles:
  - a. "As he may prosper"( **1 Cor. 16:2** ).
  - b. Whatever is given with "a willing mind"( **2 Cor. 8:12** ).
  - c. "According to what one has"( **2 Cor. 8:12-13** ).
  - d. "As he purposes (plans) in his heart"( **2 Cor. 9:7** ).
  - e. Whatever one can give "cheerfully", not "grudgingly" or "of necessity" ( **2 Cor. 9:7** ).
  - f. Keeping in mind the principle of "sowing and reaping"( **2 Cor. 9:6,8** ).
6. Even this activity fulfills the three-fold purpose mentioned at the beginning:
  - a. We are blessed in giving( **Acts 20:35; 2 Cor. 9:11** ).
  - b. Brethren's needs are met( **2 Cor. 9:12a** ).
  - c. God is glorified( **2 Cor. 9:12-15** ).
7. To help motivate us in giving, remember the examples of the churches in Macedonia and and of the Lord Himself( **2 Cor. 8:1-9** ).

## **II. HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF OUR ASSEMBLIES.**

### **A. KEEP IN MIND WHO IS PRESENT...**

1. Our brethren in Christ.
  - a. People like you, who appreciate the encouragement of other Christians.
  - b. So take the time to visit with them before and after the assembly
    - 1) Don't get into the habit of always coming in at the last minute.
    - 2) Don't be in such a rush to leave after the service is ended.
2. Frequently visitors.
  - a. Who naturally draw conclusions about the congregation during their visit.
    - 1) Will they conclude we are really disciples of Jesus?( **John 13:35** ).
    - 2) Will they say "God is truly among you"?( **1 Cor. 14:25** ).
  - b. So take the time to welcome them and visit with them( **Heb. 13:2** ).
3. And especially our Lord( **Matt. 18:20** ).

### **B. "YOU GET OUT OF IT WHAT YOU PUT INTO IT."**

1. Preparation beforehand makes a big difference.
  - a. Such as praying and meditating upon what you are going to do.
  - b. Planning what you can do to make the assembly more edifying (such as welcoming and visiting)
  - c. In other words, come to serve, not to be served.
2. The more you come, the more interest you show, the more you will grow!
  - a. This is true in any endeavor (e.g., physical exercise, hobbies)
  - b. "How often do I have to come?" is an indication of spiritual immaturity!
    - 1) It displays a lack of true love for Christ and His brethren.
    - 2) It shows that one is selfishly concerned with how little they can do to save themselves
    - 3) Does the love of God abide in such a person?( **1 John 3:16-19** ).

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. Rather, our attitude ought to be like that expressed by David in **Psa. 122:1**.
2. Neglecting the assemblies is detrimental to our spiritual growth as disciples of Christ
3. Do we express our love for God, our brethren, even our own selves as we should?
4. One of the greatest spiritual blessings we enjoy in Christ in this life is the fellowship we share in our public assemblies... Let's all do our part to fully utilize that blessing!

### **SOME QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE YOUR THINKING . . .**

1. Does one attend the assemblies to be entertained, or to serve?
2. Do you attend every assembly of the congregation where you are?
3. If not, are you praying to God to help you make it possible for you to do so?
4. What can you do before the assemblies to get more out of them?