

WHY MANY DO NOT ATTEND REGULARLY

It is a well known fact that in most congregations there are members who are not regular in their attendance. Some will not attend any of the Bible study classes, either Sunday morning or Wednesday night. And some will not attend any time except Sunday morning. Others are not even regular in their attendance on Sunday morning. Why does this condition exist?

I am sure that I do not have all the answers, but I would like to suggest some of the reasons that these are not regular in their attendance at every assembly.

Some do not assemble with any regularity because they have simply developed the habit of NOT doing so. Some are from religious backgrounds where little or no emphasis was placed upon the need to attend regularly. Some may have "grown up" in a congregation where they only had one assembly each week. Now, even though they are members of a congregation that meets more often, they still attend only once a week.

Others do not attend regularly because of indifference. They simply are not interested enough in serving the Lord, worshiping God or studying His word to attend with any regularity. The Lord rebukes such an attitude when writing to the church at Laodicea (Rev. 3:14ff). These need to repent before it is too late.

There are some who fail to attend all of the assemblies because of the attitude they have toward serving God and obeying His will. These, when questioned about their failure to attend, will often reply, *"Where does it say that I have to attend anytime other than the first day of the week?"* Their attitude toward obedience and service is one of doing just what is commanded to be done and nothing more. It is true that we must not go beyond the teaching of God's word, however when it comes to serving God there is an attitude involved which causes us to do His will from a willing mind rather than out of necessity.

Jesus sets forth this truth in Matthew 5:41. Here He says, *"And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."* The point is that we do not do just what we "have to do" or are compelled to do, but we serve (go the second mile) because we are willing to do so. Paul makes this same point when he writes to the Corinthians about the matter of giving. He notes that first there must be a *"willing mind"* (2 Cor. 8:12) and that we must do so *"not grudgingly, or of necessity"* but cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7).

If every member would develop this attitude toward serving God I am convinced that we would see more dedicated lives and would not see the indifference and unconcern that is now so common. Individuals with this attitude do not talk about what they "have to do." Instead, they look upon each and every opportunity to assemble and worship God as a privilege rather than a burden. When individuals have this attitude you do not have to plead and beg with them to do the Lord's will. They gladly do so.

I think we can see that the real problem is not that some do not attend regularly, but is really one of attitude toward serving the Lord. If we are serious about being faithful servants we will desire to take advantage of every opportunity to worship Him and study His word. Why would anyone even claim to be a Christian and not desire to assemble with those of like precious faith to worship their God?

Brethren, let each of us examine our attitude toward serving the Lord. Are we really serving the Lord willingly; motivated by love and devotion, or are we fooling ourselves into thinking that we can be pleasing to God while trying to get by with the least amount of effort possible? Until we are able to bring about a change in the hearts of men and women we will not be able to see much, if any, change in the actions of these men and women. To be able to hear Him say, "*Well done good and faithful servant*" we must be good and faithful servants in this life. *✠ James Hahn*