

FACTS ABOUT ASSEMBLING (Rev 3:19-22)

A. We live in a pluralistic society in almost every way, but especially religiously.

1. In one sense that's good, because it suggests that we have the freedom to choose what we believe & practice.
 - a. In our nation there are people of every imaginable religious point of view.
 - b. The practice of Christianity in this country ranges from the quite similar to the extremely divergent.
2. And yet there is a powerful trend in our nation to tolerate & even to embrace religious pluralism.
3. Many so-called "Christian" churches are becoming more accepting of religions that make no claim to Christ.
 - a. Many of these churches have extended the right hand of fellowship to adulterers & homosexuals.
4. These circumstances have led most people to the idea that it doesn't matter what religious group you join—in fact many would say that you don't need to join any group.

[We're going to ask 3 questions today.

The answers will explain the need for assembling, & also the need to be in the right assembly.]

I. IS ASSEMBLING NECESSARY?

A. **More & more people** who call themselves Christians don't think so.

1. They've become disillusioned by controversy, division & the politics involved in trying to get things done, & so they choose not to assemble with any kind of church.

B. **But of course Christians assemble** because it is a command of God to His children.

1. *"To exhort one another & to consider one another in order to stir up love & good works"* (Heb 10:24-25).
2. *"Let all things be done for edification"* (1 Cor 14:12, 26).

C. **There is a parallel (similar) idea** to consider.

1. Remember when the Pharisees condemned Jesus & the disciples for plucking grain on the Sabbath (Mk 2:23-28)?
2. Remember how Jesus replied? He said, *"The Sabbath was made for man, & not man for the Sabbath"*.
3. The same is true about the command to assemble.
 - a. God didn't issue that command just to force us to slavishly following His orders.

- b. His issued that command for our benefit, & it will benefit us if we are exhorting, considering & edifying one another.

[If you don't assemble—as you should—then you're not taking advantage of a blessing God designed “*to build you up & to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified*” (Acts 20:32).]

II. IS WHERE YOU ASSEMBLE IMPORTANT?

A. Many people would say that Christians should assemble, but where they assemble is not important.

1. **To them...**“All churches are alike to God”.
2. **To them...**“Bible doctrine is not critical to your salvation or even to the unity of the church.”
3. **To them...**“The important thing is to just get along; agree to disagree when necessary so unity can prevail.”
4. **To them...** “Where you assemble is NOT important! **Join** the church of your choice! **Shop** around until you find the one that fits your *family*, your *interests*, your *personality*, & your *expectations*.”
 - a. If all churches were acceptable to God, then that would be good advice, but the sad fact is that all churches are not acceptable to God (Rev 2, 3).
 - b. And if all churches are NOT acceptable to God, then where you assemble DOES matter.

B. There are 4 things that make a church acceptable to God:

1. It will be unified on **truth** (Eph 4:1-6)
2. It will perpetuate **truth** (1 Tim 3:15)
3. It will reject **error** (2 Jn 9-11; Rev 2:2-3)
4. It will repent when it fails to uphold truth (Rev 2:4-5)

C. So what about churches that condone things that are in open conflict with God's word?

1. Homosexuality, drunkenness, fornication, unlawful marriages, & the covetousness of gambling.
2. Women pastors, infant membership (sprinkling), instrumental music, faith only salvation.
3. Churches claiming to be "of Christ" that do not demand NT authority for their practices.

[Does it matter where you assemble? It most certainly does! Jesus warned that God only accepts those who do the will of His Father (Matt 7:21-23).

May we strive to be members of a church that do the Father's will.]

III. IS THE ASSEMBLY FOR GIVING OR TAKING?

A. Many people will attend a religious assembly only when they can take advantage of something.

1. Even members of the Lord's church leave 1 congregation for another because the 1st didn't meet their expectations.

a. Is this the type of attitude & behavior that God wants from His children?

1 Cor 10:24 – Let *no one seek his own*, but each one the other's well-being.

Rom 15:1 – We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, & *not to please ourselves*.

Phil 2:1-4 – Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection & mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let *each of you look out* not only for his own interests, but also *for the interests of others*.

2. It takes a mature Christian to seek the betterment of others, & some never reach that level of maturity.

B. Jesus wants us to GIVE OF OURSELVES at the assembly.

1. It is the *servant*, not the *complainer*, who will find true joy & happiness in the assemblies of the Lord's church.

2. If we have the right attitude about the assembly then we will be found encouraging & building up others; & even trying to gently correct them if need be.

- a. And those actions will not be limited to assembly times, but they will become a part of our daily Christian walk.

[**Let's** strive to do more giving than taking from the assembly. **May** we learn & grow in faith so as to be good servants to one another.]

CLOSING

A. **Today we have talked about the importance of assembling.**

1. Is it necessary to assemble?
2. Is where or with whom you assemble important?
3. Is the assembly for giving or taking?

B. **May we leave here today with the understanding:**

1. God commands the assembling together of His people.
2. God commands that we assemble with those who are obedient to His word.
3. God's assembly has not been designed to meet our expectations, but to provide an opportunity for us to serve each other in this life.

“He who has an ear,
let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”
(**Rev 3:22**).