

Assemble together to edify one another

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Although the book of Hebrews is often recognized as a valuable resource to study theology, parts of the book give simple practical advice. Such is the case with the words in Hebrews 10:25.

The writer encourages readers to assemble together with other believers. This assembling together can be done throughout the week, and it can be done on the Sabbath.

People occasionally ask me: Must a believer attend a church service with a larger congregation, or can a believer attend a church service in a home?

When people ask this question they usually mention that a person (family member or friend) has attempted to make them feel guilty for not attending with a specific church group.

My answer is twofold. First, a believer is not required to attend a church service with a larger congregation. Second, wherever a believer chooses to attend, he should do his part to create an environment of edification.

Home fellowships

When you look at believers in the New Testament church you will see clues that they met in homes.

- Believers met in the home of Aquila and Priscilla (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19).
- Believers met in the home of Nymphas (Colossians 4:15).
- Believers met in the home of Philemon (Philemon 1-2).

Someone could ask: Didn't believers meet in synagogues?

My answer: You will see that Christ and the apostles attended various synagogues. But you might be surprised to see *why* they attended the synagogues. As it turns out, the record shows that these men were teaching in the synagogues.

Near the end of His physical life, Jesus told the high priest (in John 18:20): I spoke openly to the world. I regularly taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where the Jews consistently gathered. I have said nothing in secret.

Teaching in temple

If you study every place in the New Testament where the word *temple* is used, you will see many examples of Jesus and the apostles teaching in the temple.

Some of the examples of Jesus teaching in the temple are John 8:20, Luke 19:47, Matthew 21:23-27 and Matthew 26:55.

Some of the examples of the apostles teaching in the temple are Acts 3:12-26, Acts 5:17-25 and Acts 5:42.

Teaching in synagogues

If you study every place in the New Testament where the word *synagogue* is used, you will see even more examples of Jesus and the apostles teaching in the synagogues.

Some of the examples of Jesus teaching in the synagogues are in Mark 1:21, Matthew 4:23, Luke 4:15-29, Luke 6:6, Matthew 9:35, Matthew 13:54, Luke 13:10 and John 6:59.

Some of the examples of the apostles teaching in the synagogues are Acts 9:20, Acts 13:5, Acts 13:14-44, Acts 14:1, Acts 17:1-3, Acts 17:10, Acts 17:17, Acts 18:4, Acts 18:19, Acts 18:26 and Acts 19:8.

These examples do not require a believer to meet regularly in a synagogue or with a larger group.

These examples show us that Christ and the apostles set an example of serving. They taught wherever the people were assembling.

Tool of edification

When you went back to reading Hebrews 10:25, did you notice another phrase in that verse? The writer mentioned that believers should exhort one another.

Did you notice a phrase in the previous verse, Hebrews 10:24? The writer mentioned that believers should influence with love and good works.

This world is filled with enough contention and destruction. There are two places where you should find peace and edification: in your home and in your place of worship.

Not only should a believer find peace and edification in his home and in his place of worship, a believer should be a *tool* of peace and edification.

Don't allow well-meaning family and friends to place a guilt trip on you to talk you into attending a larger congregation. (For that matter, don't allow well-meaning family and friends to place a guilt trip on you to convince you to attend a home fellowship.)

Enjoy your larger congregation if it is a place of peace and edification. Enjoy your home fellowship if it is a place of peace and edification.

As you remember to regularly assemble together, exhort and edify one another.

As this society becomes more negative and destructive, ask God to let you be a tool of peace and edification.