

I love My Church

Ephesians 5:25 says that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. Jesus loves the church. **Verse 39** says that “*we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones*”

Opening Text: Hebrews 10:23-25

V.25 Amplified Bible (AMPC): *Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching.*

This is an area of the Bible that is quite clear. The scriptures state very plainly that we should not neglect to worship collectively.

“Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together as believers, as is the habit of some people”

The word *habit*, in Greek, is the word ‘*ethos*’. To neglect assembling together was clearly the wrong *ethos*. It was a wrong habit.

Psalms 122:1 - *I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go into the house of the Lord.”*

Read also Isaiah 2:2-3.

7 reasons why this is so important

1. Salvation is not merely a relationship with Jesus that allows us to go to heaven when we die. It is also a communal relationship with other believers to fulfill the mission of the church: to reach souls and make disciples.

We come together to fulfill the mission of the church. Every time we come together, these doors are open, and we provide an opportunity for people to come in and hear about Jesus. That is our mission.

Also when people come to Christ, they need a place to grow. The church is a place of growth.

Our Connect Groups are also expressions of that collective mission. Each CG is an open door in the community.

2. Secondly, the New Testament always uses collective metaphors to describe the church:
 - **Flock** (John 10:11-16)
 - **Body** (Romans 12: 4-5)
 - **Family** (Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:19; 1 Peter 4:17)

- **Temple** (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, Ephesians 2:21)
- **Household** (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 2:5)

The idea of isolated believers is foreign to the NT.

In our opening text, we read “*let us not neglect*” or “*let us encourage one another*”. There are 13 “*let us*” in Hebrews alone. The New Testament is also full of “*one another*” passages. Our faith is definitely communal.

The great preacher Charles Spurgeon said:

“Some Christians try to go to heaven alone, in solitude. But believers are not compared to bears or lions, or other animals that wander alone. Those who belong to Christ are sheep, in this respect – that they love to get together. Sheep go in flocks and so do God’s people”

3. Thirdly, real believers commit to a local church because they need the help of others to keep following Jesus. They are humble enough to know that they need the exhortation, encouragement, strengthening and comfort of other believers.

Hebrews 10:25 says “*Exhorting one another as you see the day approaching*”.

As the Amplified Bible puts it : “*warning, urging, and encouraging one another*”

Church is a great place of encouragement and growth!

We refresh one another - **Romans 15:32** - *that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you.*

4. In most of Paul’s writings in the New Testament, he almost always refers to the church as a **body**. In Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 we read how a body is made up of different members with different functions and with different gifts.

1 Corinthians 12: 4 - *There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.*

12 - *For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.*

1 Corinthians 14:26 - *How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.*

Ephesians 4:16 says that we grow as a ‘body’ by what every member supplies.

There is great power when we combine our gifts, our talents and our resources.

5. Another metaphor used in the New Testament to describe the church is that of an **army**, where every Christian is a soldier.

We read about that in Philippians 2:25, 2 Timothy 2:3-4, Philemon 1:2

We can only fulfill our mission when we come together as an army does: disciplined, marching in ranks against the powers of darkness. Isolated we fail. The isolated Christian will succumb. We are stronger and invincible when we march together.

6. We all need the spiritual protection and the covering of God-appointed leaders (Ephesians 4:11-12). Jesus gave leadership to the church. These leaders will provide us with teaching and they will watch out for our souls!

Ephesians 4:11-12 - *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,*

Hebrews 13:17 - *Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.*

7. God commands His blessing when His people come together

Psalms 133: *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! ² It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments ³ It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the Lord commanded the blessing— life forevermore.*

Jesus promised to be with us when we come together, right in our midst (Matthew 18:20) and he will answer their corporate prayers (Acts 4:23-31; 12:5). The Holy Spirit fell on the day of Pentecost to a group of 120 who had gathered together with one accord, in one place (Acts 2:1).

Conclusion:

Why do we meet and do what we do?

1. **To fulfill our mission**
2. **Because we are a body, a flock, and a family**
3. **For mutual encouragement**
4. **To combine our talents, gifts, and resources**
5. **Because we are an army. We are stronger when we march together**
6. **Because we need the covering and teaching of God-appointed leaders**
7. **Because the Lord commands His blessing on corporate meetings**