

## Sanctuary Churches

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by Al Diestelkamp

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that we should welcome everyone to hear the word proclaimed, but this does not mean that we should accept everyone into fellowship with us in our work for the Lord. When Saul of Tarsus tried to join the disciples in Jerusalem, the disciples rejected him until Barnabas vouched for him (Acts 9:26-28). Later in life, as the apostle Paul, his reputation was such that he needed no “*letters of commendation*” as did some others (2 Cor. 3:1). These examples make it clear that the early church recognized the right of and need for a local congregation to decide who will be part of its fellowship.

Often when brethren move from one community to another, we already know of their faith and can accept them without any question; but when they are not known to us, we would do well to make certain they are true disciples and have the endorsement of faithful brethren from whence they came. We should especially be wary of those who leave a congregation near to where they live in favor of a church that is more distant lest we harbor ones who are avoiding responsibility or simply evading corrective discipline.

### Anticipating An Objection

When the apostle Paul commanded brethren in Thessalonica to “*withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly*” (2 Thess. 3:6) he apparently was addressing an actual problem of some who were “*not working at all*” (v.12). Some who are resistant to withdrawing from those who are “*out of duty*” when it comes to worship will insist that this command does not apply. However, the command is to withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly — not just those who are “*busybodies*” as a result of not working. The apostle gave a wide-ranging command and applied it to a specific form of disorderly conduct. Think about it! Failing to work is no more “*disorderly*” than “*forsaking the assembling of ourselves together*” (Heb. 10:25).

— via **THINK On These Things**  
Volume 48; Number 3  
July-August-September, 2017

## Building Up Attendance

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by Wayne Goff

Some brethren have “*given up*” on faithful attendance on Sunday night and have cancelled their evening services. I wonder aloud if those brethren feel like they have accomplished all that God expects of us in our worship, or if they have just become so worldly that they no longer enjoy worshiping God with all their brethren?

*Every Christian* must do his/her part in building up attendance. Here are some reasons for every assembly:

- Feel a personal responsibility to worship, Matthew 4:8-11; 22:36-40
- Utilize every opportunity to study God’s Word, 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18
- Desire the fellowship of brethren more than that of the world! Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 15:33
- Feel a personal responsibility to invite others to worship with us, John 1:43-46
- Show the world that Christianity actually means something to them and that we are willing to sacrifice a little time each week to grow and mature, Titus 2:7-8

The reality, brethren, is that the Lord’s church in America *in many places* is dying. It may even be “*dead*” already in the eyes of the Lord (see Rev. 2-3)! No, we don’t **HAVE** to assemble on Sunday night to be a sound, faithful congregation. But Christians in general need all the teaching and instruction possible!

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