

Missing Services

by Joe Raulerson

I remember my grandfather telling me a number of years ago, about an elderly gentleman who had an accident while farming. His tractor had tipped over, pinning the man for two days underneath the tractor. The way in which the man was discovered was something that was reported by a few local news organizations. It was reported that members of the church he attended came and discovered him pinned underneath his tractor. What was the reason they sought him out? The elderly farmer, who was faithful to attend when the church assembled, had missed Wednesday night services. What does this say about us?

On one hand, we can ask the question, *“Does it seem strange for me to miss services?”* Remember, the reason some of the members of that congregation had gone looking for the elderly farmer was due to the fact he had missed a Wednesday night service. Is our attendance here that consistent? If we are following the pattern God has established, it will be! Hebrews 10:25 says, *“not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”*

What if you were to have a similar emergency? Would your absence be noticed? Or, would members here assume that you just decided not to come today because you were tired, or one of many excuses you constantly offer? Ask yourself, how many services have you missed in the last year? Can you honestly count yourself as a faithful, regular worshiper at this congregation? Some brethren seem to think, *“So what if I’m just at services every now and then? If that’s the worst sin I ever commit, I’ll make it to Heaven.”* Are you sure of that? The Bible says that all sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 6:23). The Bible makes it clear that we can lose our souls over just one sin (Acts 8:13-24). How many times does a person have to **willfully** miss to commit a sin? The first time is just as much a sin as the fourth time or the fortieth time, if it is willful sin (Hebrews 10:26).

Another lesson we can take from this story is the care that the brethren show for one another. The Hebrew writer told us in Hebrews 10:24, *“Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.”* We should be doing this by attending services and encouraging one another. However, the brethren also showed concern for their brother when he was not at services. They had a concern for their brother’s soul and for his physical well-being when he was not at services. Do we have the same care and compassion? Whenever brethren are absent do we check up on them? Even when they give a reason for their absence, do we attempt to check up on them ourselves? Let us obey Hebrews 10:24 and show our love toward our brethren.

— via **Search For The Truth**
bulletin of the Elm Grove Church of Christ
Luka, Illinois

323903