

## Support Your Local Church

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by Wayne Goff

Attendance is a great barometer for spiritual interest. The more important the Lord and His church are to you, the more important attendance will be. Sometimes our interest wanes a bit, and we don't really see the point of attending all the services of the church. Questions like "Do I have to attend *every* service of the church?" indicates a problem of spiritual perception. Something is wrong with our thinking.

The contrast of interest can be seen in two Old Testament examples. King David **exclaimed**, "*I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the LORD'"* (Psalm 122:1). His interest in spiritual things was high; he was a man after God's own heart. On the other hand, some Jews of Malachi's day **complained**, "*Oh, what a weariness! And you sneer at it, says the LORD of hosts"* (Mal. 1:13). Read the context of chapter 1 and see their contempt for God and His temple. The worst part of it was that these were the priests! (v. 6). God desires our worship and He knows instantly whether our heart is in it, or whether we are going through the motions.

**Excuses** made for not attending would be comical if they weren't so serious. The Lord taught a parable about a great supper in which many were invited, "*but they all with one accord began to make excuses"* (Lk. 14:18). The master of the house became angry and invited others to fill his banquet hall, until there was no room left (vv. 21-23). "*For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper"* (v. 24)!

God *desires* for men to worship Him in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24). He *loves* the adoration of those who love Him! He also *ordained* worship as a means of brethren stirring up each other to love and good works (Heb. 10:24). He **commands** us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Heb. 10:25). He connects **willful sinning** to absenteeism in the very next verse (v. 26)! God takes the matter very seriously. If you have an attendance problem, please get some help from someone who can build up and strengthen your faith.

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