

# The Blessings of Congregating

**Textual Idea:** It is God's plan for His people to assemble in order to worship, encourage one another, and serve.

**Homiletical Idea:** God has a special blessing for those who get involved in the local church.

**Purpose Statement:** Encourage new and old believers to attend church regularly and get involved.

## 1. People today give different reasons not to attend church.

- i. Hypocrisy
- ii. Worship style
- iii. No one at my age group
- iv. Distance
- v. Church online

## 2. Example of believers congregating both in the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

- i. Gathering together for worship began with God meeting with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day.

“And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.” Genesis 3:8

- ii. God expected that the families would come together to worship God.

“For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.” Genesis 18:19

- iii. God called the Israelites for holy convocations.

“Bless God in the congregations, The Lord, from the fountain of Israel.” Psalms 68:26

- iv. In the New Testament we also see people congregating. (Jesus Himself congregated.)

“I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.” Hebrews 2:12

- v. People will congregate in paradise on the Sabbath.
  - The Sabbath is a day dedicated for congregational worship.

“For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,’ says the Lord, ‘So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass *that* from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,’ says the Lord.” Isaiah 66:22, 23

“Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation.” Leviticus 23:3

### **3. Does God want us to be involved in a local church?**

- i. Yes, God calls us to become part of His church.

“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. **13** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink [g]into one Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13

“And He is the head of the body, the church...” Colossians 1:18

“Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” Acts 2:47

### **4. Why congregating is important?**

- i. God manifests His presence in a special way during public worship.

“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” Matthew 18:20

- ii. To learn about God: the gospel, His will, advises for our lives, etc.

“And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: ‘Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them.’” Deuteronomy 5:1

“And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” Acts 11:26

- iii. To experience congregational prayer.

“For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” Isaiah 56:7

- iv. Congregating creates a community of faith to encourage one another.
  - A room full of believers creates synergy.

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:24, 25

v. Congregating also includes fellowship gatherings.

“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*. **42** And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Acts 2:41, 42

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.” Acts 2:46

vi. Congregating facilitate service.

- Congregating gives the opportunity to use our gifts in God’s worship.
- Community service becomes easier.

“There are [d]iversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. **5** There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. **6** And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works [e]all in all. **7** But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*.” *1 Corinthians 12:4-7*

- Statement from Michael Carl:

“As church attendance numbers fade across the nation and online services become very convenient it’s important to remember why church attendance for you and your family matters so much. You can’t serve from your sofa. You can’t have community of faith on your sofa. You can’t experience the power of a room full of believers worshipping together on your sofa. Christians aren’t consumers. We are contributors. We don’t watch. We engage. We give. We sacrifice. We encourage. We pray by laying hands on the hurting. We do life together.” Michael Carl

## **5. Is the church comprised of perfect people?**

i. Jesus said that in the field of the wheat there will be tares.

“Another parable He put forth to them, saying: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; **25** but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. **26** But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. **27** So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ **28** He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ **29** But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. **30** Let both grow together

until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.’” Matthew 13:24-30

- ii. Examples of tares in the Church.
  - The mix multitude among the Israelites in the wilderness.
  - Judas among the 12 disciples.
- iii. You also have true disciples that make mistakes in their journey of faith:
  - David committed adultery.
  - The disciples often disputed for the first place.
- iv. The church is a place where there should be a lot of grace, like the family circle.

**6. There is a congregation in heaven, and God wants to congregate heaven and earth together.**

- i. Jesus gave us the example that we must follow.

“So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And **as His custom was**, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.” Luke 4:16

- ii. Those who hear the voice/word of Jesus will become part of God’s people.

“And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd.” John 10:16

“That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.” Ephesians 1:10

**Conclusion:**

1. God requests His followers to engage in public worship;
2. Jesus left an example of congregational worship for us to follow;
3. God manifests His presence in a special way during public worship;
4. God calls us to be part of a local congregation;
5. New believers should not have an unrealistic expectation that all believers are mature Christians;
6. Congregational worship provides a community of faith for instruction, fellowship, and encouragement;
7. Church facilitates service.