

Attending Church

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Today, more and more people are just concerned about their own wellbeing without caring much about society, family, or other groups of people. This may also influence Christians and their relation to the church. On the other hand, people like to meet in clubs, pubs, at sporting events, etc. because humans are sociable beings. But is it necessary to attend church?

I. Jesus and His Church

- Luke 4:18 At the time of Jesus, Jews met every Sabbath in the synagogue for worship (Acts 15:21). It was Jesus' custom to go to "church" regularly on Sabbath.
- Matt 16:18 Jesus established the church. The church is a group of believers that follows Jesus, believes what Jesus believed, and does things together.
- John 10:16 Christians are also called His "flock." This term implies that Jesus' disciples are not only isolated believers but form a group that meets, listens to God's Word, prays, proclaims the gospel, etc. Without meeting, sharing a common message, and being involved in a common task, there is no "flock" or church.
- Matt 18:20 Sometimes the local congregations may be small, but where two or three are assembled in the name of Jesus, He has promised to be with them.

Jesus emphasized the ordinance of footwashing (John 13:14–15), instituted the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19, 20), and gave the Great Commission (Matt 28:18–20). All of this requires a church and believers that meet regularly—particularly on Sabbaths—to worship God and serve humanity.

II. The Practice of the Early Church

- Acts 1:15 After Jesus' ascension to heaven, the believers met in Jerusalem.
- Acts 2:1 While together, they experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- Acts 2:41; 5:14 Those who accepted the gospel were baptized and added to the church. Baptism involves living with the community and family of Christ—His church.
- Acts 2:42, 46 They enjoyed regular fellowship.
- Acts 12:5 While Peter was imprisoned, the church was praying for him and a miracle occurred.

III. Paul and the Church

- Acts 13:14, 42 Paul went to the synagogue on Sabbath.
- Acts 16:13 On Sabbath, Paul and his companions were looking for an outdoor gathering place for communal prayer.
- Acts 17:2 It was Paul's custom to attend worship services on Sabbath.
- Acts 18:4 This was also an opportunity to discuss and teach Christian beliefs.
- Heb 10:25 This text contains a clear admonition to meet together. Christians cannot be people who live in isolation, unless they find themselves in a place with no other believers. To meet is necessary in order to encourage, comfort, and strengthen each other; learn from each

other; be more and more grounded in the Lord and His message; and be prepared to do what He calls His disciples to do.

IV. Christians Meeting over the Centuries

Church history reveals that over the centuries Christians maintained that they needed to meet on a regular basis. Even when persecuted, Christians did not give up assembling for worship and other purposes. They may have fled to other places (Acts 8:1, 4). The Waldenses moved to remote places in the Alps; others went underground. Christians, Adventists among them, met regularly.

It was very well understood that it is not optional to form a fellowship of believers in order to meet as a church.

V. Adventists and Their Meetings

Adventists meet on the biblical Sabbath to study and worship. They believe it is necessary to have a Bible study session in which believers and guests can learn, share their experiences, ask questions, make meaningful comments, and prepare for their ministry. Jesus opened the Scriptures on Sabbath morning and shared. Paul taught and discussed the gospel with people on the Sabbath.

In addition, the Adventist Church devotes time to hearing God's message preached in a sermon, singing and praying to the Lord, thanking Him for His guidance, and bringing tithes and offerings.

However, the life of the church is not totally expressed by meetings on Sabbath. There are other meetings and activities on other days of the week. Some churches have official prayer meetings, meetings for pathfinders and youth, meetings for women and men, social meetings, etc. In addition, larger churches may have small groups that meet for Bible study and prayer during the week and for various other purposes. To join them can be very beneficial.

Conclusion

A Christian in deliberate isolation is an oxymoron. Believers in Jesus Christ form His church. They refrain from thinking just about themselves. They form a larger community—a fellowship and family that lives for the common good, shares the wonderful gospel entrusted to it, and reaches out to those having all kinds of needs.