

Virtual Church?

By Elder David Pyles

These are extraordinary times in which many churches across the world have suspended meetings on account of Coronavirus and they have gone to live-stream or recorded services instead. This has caused much concern that some Christians might develop bad habits during this crisis and will think it sufficient to continue to worship remotely by such electronic means when the virus passes. This would indeed be very wrong and contrary to scripture. In a passage that should be well known, the Apostle Paul said:

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. – Heb 10:24-25

Meeting together in an assembly is therefore duty to any Christian. Indeed, the Greek word for “church” means “assembly.”

The Jewish equivalent of church was of course the synagogue. Scriptures tell us that Jesus was faithful to attend on a weekly basis (Lk 4:16). The same was said of Paul (Acts 17:2). Next, consider the multitude of passages where Jesus commanded us saying, “*follow me.*” The list includes: Mt 4:19, Mt 8:22, Mt 9:9, Mt 16:24, Mt 19:21, Mk 2:14, Mk 8:34, Mk 10:21, Lk 5:27, Lk 9:23, Lk 9:59, Lk 18:22, Jn 1:43, Jn 10:27, Jn 12:26, Jn 13:36, Jn 21:19. Add to this that Paul said, “*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ,*” (1 Cor 11:1). A true Christian is by definition a follower of Jesus Christ, and any true follower of Jesus Christ must be faithful to attend church.

The church is sometimes compared in scriptures to a human body (1Cor 12:12-31, Eph 5:23-33, Col 1:18). The head of this body is Christ and we make up its various other parts. Now the parts of a human body are invaluable as functioning members of that body, but they are near worthless when apart from it. For example, a human thumb on the sidewalk has neither value nor appeal. Such is the case with a church member who is negligent to attend.

Some will possibly say they can get as much seated on their couch watching church on a TV or a computer as they can sitting in a congregation. This is very probably untrue, but even if it were, such does little or nothing toward inspiring and encouraging others. Our presence in the assembly does. This may be one of our greatest contributions to the Cause of Christ. If we truly love His Cause, then we will be faithfully attending church whenever the doors are open.