The Christian COURIER

Post Office Box 1342
Modesto, California 95353
Published Monthly by Brethren of the Church of Christ
APRIL 1975

IS CHURCH ATTENDANCE ESSENTIAL?

There are some in the body of Christ that attend the service regularly and there are some that don't. Now I'm not here to critize or to stand in judgement. That is far form my intention. I believe that every aspect of the teachings of God should be brought out. I have been guilty of not attending as I should just has those who do the same thing, so if I seem as though I'm judging others, I would rather judge myself.

I ask myself; "has God left man to his own choice about this matter? Is it God's will that we attend church services regularly? or is He just as well pleased when we do not attend? These are vital questions which every child of God should answer. All Bible questions must be answered in the light of Bible teachings.

Therefore, lay aside our own wishes or excuses, let us consider the evidence. Whatever the will of the Lord is we should be willing to comply with it, and not try to please ourselves. Therefore, let us note the following:

1. REGULAR CHURCH ATTENDANCE IS ESSENTIAL TO OBEYING GOD.

This message is addressed to all the true children of God. No sinner or individual that is not a child of God would be interested. Not interested in obeying God, that is. However, if there is one reading this, that is not born again, child of God, you too can learn a little what it is like to be a child of God, and how a christian must live in order to be right in the sight of God.

There are at least three commands disobeyed when we do not worship at least once a week on the Lord's Day. The command to assemble is broken. "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.

We might wonder, what day? Why? Well, this is the answer. Sin.. "For if we sin wilfully after that we have recieved the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth NO MORE SACRIFICE for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgement (that day) and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth to me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, the Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.". verses 26-31 of the same chapter.

I know I'm thinking,"I don't want to be the one to trod under foot the Son of God." And I'm sure that every one is thinking the same thing. Well, this is why we must not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.. Us, meaning the true born-again children of the living God.

We know that the early church, (Christians), assembled on the first day of the week, and there are a great many historical writings aside from the Word of God, that affirm these facts.

The command to break bread, to partake, to serve the communion of the blood and body of Christ. "This do in remembereance of me" said Jesus as He instructed us about the Lords' Supper. Luke 22:19. Hence, it is a command. To fail or refuse to obey it is a sin. As to how often the communion of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be observed, we have an approved example proving that it should be on the first day of the week. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." Acts 20:7.

When did they meet? "Upon the first day of the week." Why? "To break bread." And when some read that Paul continued his speech until midnight, they use this against one who talks a little too long on Sunday morning. Now I'm not saying that we should sit and listen to a sermon all day long and up until midnight, because Paul only carried his speech that long, because he was going to

leave them the next day, and he spoke the Word of God to them just as long as they would stay and hear it, which was until midnight.

From the other scriptures we learn that other phases of worship were also engaged in, but this passage is specific in stating that they met for the purpose of breaking bread, or partaking of the communion. Every week has a first day. If we follow the Apostolic example, we too will meet upon the first day of the week to break bread, as well as to worship,as we have been taught by the Holy Word of God.

The Jews were taught in the Old Testament to "Remember the sabbath to keep it holy." They understood that every sabbath was meant. If "the sabbath" meant every sabbath, then, why would not "the first day of the week" mean every first day of the week....the first day of every week? In A.D. 72, Banabas said,"the eighth day is the beginning of another week, and therefore with joy we celebrate the eighth day, on which Jesus arose".

In A.D. 150, Justin Martyr said,"On the Lord's day all christians in the city and the country mee together, because that is the day of our Lord's resurrection; and then we read the Apostles and Prophets. This being done, the president(preacher) makes an oration to the assembly to exhort them to imitate and practice the things which they have heard, and them we all join in prayer, and after that we celebrate(partake) the Lord's Supper; and they who are able and willing give what they think proper and what is collected is laid up in the hands of the president, who distributes it to the orphans, and widows,and other necessitous Christians as their wants require." Mosheim's Eccleastical History Vol.I page 135 Note 10.

And another historical recorder, well known by the New York Eccleastical Society, has this to say,"Weekly communion did not die with the Apostles and their contemporaries. There is a cloud of witnesses to testify that they were kept up by succeeding Christians.The fact is indisputable."(By Dr. John Mason of New York in his letters on Frequent Communion). Even the carnal man who does not take the Word of the Bible, which is God's dir ect Word to His people,there is overwhelming proof in the wirtings of many a great historian, who base their proof on substanciated findings.

Why did the early Christians observe it weekly? Because the Apostles who were guided into all truths by Jesus himself, and also by the Spirit, taught them to do so.

Hence, this is one of the characteristics or guidelines of the true Church of Christ. Any religious body that does not have the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, in a true prescribed manner, as Jesus himself, taught, cannot be the true Church of Christ. Further more, any so-called follower of God who does not commune weekly,when it is possible for him to do so, is violating the commandment of God.

Another command that is broken by not attending the public worship of the body of Christ, which is His Church, is the command to give. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order tot the churches of Galatia, even do ye.Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there by no gatherings when I come."ICor. 16:1-2.

"Lay by him", means, let that one, him, the one that is laying by, lay by in store as God has prospered. Not set ammount or percentage of a persons' income. But as God hath prospered him. So, a person knows how much he can lay by in store, for the Lord. So God has left the ammount up to the individual, but, keep in mind that God loves a cheerful giver, not a plentiful giver, but a cheerful giver. When any one gives cheerfully, the amount will be alright if that is all they have been prospered.Some few send, or bring it on their next worship, if they miss (Re.sick;etc.) one Lord's day worship, but as a rule the majority do not give, if they do not attend. But if you miss the worship WILFULLY then even if you send your contribution, it still will not justify you're not attending the service.

2. CHURCH ATTENDANCE IS ESSENTIAL TO SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT.

Everyone who is a child of God, needs the fellowship, teaching, encouragement, and spiritual strength derived, from attending the worship and the visitation with other brothers and sisters in Christ. When a person fails to attend the worship regularly, he tends to loose interest and make the spiritual progress that he otherwise would. The longer he stays away, the farther away from God he will grow. It's just like putting your arm in a sling, and not using it, it soon will become so weak that you won't be able to use it at all. In otherwords, it will become useless.We, more so, will become useless to ourselves, and to God.

"Then said Jesus unto them, Verily,verily,I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."John 6:53. To eat the flesh of the Son of man and to drink his blood is to ac-

cept the teachings of Christ in loving faith and willing obedience, and it is the communion of his body and blood. The fruit of the vine, grapejuice, unfermented, and pure, becomes his blood when we partake of it,and the bread,unleavened, becomes his body when we partake of it. This is the communion, the coming together, the living together, the abiding with Christ. This is the reason for, and the means by which we live and have our being, in Christ. This is how we can show the world that we are the followers of God. This is how we know that he is the Son of the Living God. We must recognize the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross,and by faith and obedience receive the benefits of his death.And the benefits of his death is the forgiveness of sins,which lead to life everlasting with God. This is done by being "baptized INTO his death." Rom.6:3.

No one has been saved by the blood of Christ,except he has been born again, that is baptized into his death, wherein his blood was shed. The guards came along and broke the legs of the other two that was crucified with Christ.But they were alive when they had their les broken but Christ was dead when the soldier thrust the spear into his side,and then and then only did he shed his blood. In his death.

If anyone teaches that you are saved without baptism into Christ, then they are teaching that the death of Christ was to no avail. That it was not necessary for him to die for the sins of the world.

On the cross he shed water and blood, in his death. Thus we are baptized, by water into his death,and his shed blood cleanseth us from all sin. To accept the teaching of Christ and follow the same embraces most certainly the communion of the body and the blood of Christ, which is commonly called THE LORD'S SUPPER."Upon the first day of the week". Hence, those who do not obey Christ in this respect, "have no life" in them..no spiritual life.

If a person partakes of the communion of the body and the blood of Christ, improperly then he is not one of his, or is sick and is guilty of Christ's blood."For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep". I Cor.11:29-30. In otherwords they are a sleep to the actual truth of the matter and are sick, spiritually.

Jesus did not mean that we are to eat his literal body and drink his literal blood. This was never done by

the Apostles, nor could it be done today, because his body is not with us, literal body, that is.No one living has ever seen the literal body of our Lord, nor can any man change the bread and grape juice into his blood and body, only he, Jesus himself, can change it,it becomes the communion of his body and blood with our Spiritual body and blood.

3. CHURCH ATTENDANCE IS ESSENTIAL TO THE PROPER FUNCTIONING OF THE CHURCH.

The early Church had its mission, and that was to teach the world about Christ and his teaching, and God would add to the Church as he saw fit. Our goal is no different. We are to teach others and refuse no one that believeth in Christ to be baptized into his body.

None of these works can be carried out successfuly without the congregation maintaining public worship---- MEETING and WORKING TOGETHER for the spreading of the Gospel. If ONE person CANNOT attend the worship,lawfully, THEN ALL should be able NOT to attend,lawfully. Why do I say this? Because God is NO RESPECTOR OF PERSONS and neither should we be. ALL the members of the body of Christ have their duty. ALL have their God to worship. When ONE stays at home, or away from the worship, then that weakens the effectiveness of the others, and when the Church is weakened, they cannot accomplish the mission it was set for us to do.

4. CHURCH ATTENDANCE IS ESSENTIAL TO LOYALTY TO CHRIST.

Do you agree, that every follower of God must be loyal to Christ and to God? "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my word, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's,and of the holy angels." Luke 9:26. Again Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commaandments".Jno. 14-15.

Since it is taught in the Word of God that his followers must not forsake the assembling of themselves together, loyalty to Him demands it. Schools have to assemble in order to teach the pupils. Businesses have to come together in order to conduct their business. So we see that it is so much more binding on the children of God to come together on the first day of the week. And when they do attend, it is up to them to find the CORRECT CONGREGATION,that worships according to the Word of God, and who observes the communion of the body and blood of Christ in the proper manner, and where they can render proper vocal music..the knid that God commaands..singing, WITHOUT MUSICAL INSTRUMENTSof any kind."Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing

and making melody in your heart to the Lord". Eph.5:19. Therefore loyalty to God, means attending the worship, not just any worship, but the correct one, which is His Church.

An example is when you are loyal to a country, such as the United States of America, you are loyal to their constitution, not to the constitution of another country.

5. IT IS ESSENTIAL TO BEING READY TO MEET CHRIST, AND BE READY FOR HIS COMING.

No one is ready for the return of the Lord, who is disobedient or disloyal to him. Those who are forsking the assembling together are disobedient and disloyal to God. Therefore, they are unprepared to meet Christ when he comes again, and thus stand a chance to loose their souls. Jesus warns us to be ready at all times."Therefore, be ye also ready for in such an hour as he think not the Son of man cometh." Matt.24:44.
(Due to this lengthy article, and a little paper we will continue it in the May issue. It is by Bro.Homer Bryant)

****

OBEDIENCE

James 1:22 says,"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." and in Jas. 2:17 on, that faith without works is dead; that the devils also believe and tremble. And in verses 21-22,"Was not Abraham our father justified by works,when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"

We read Paul saying in Gal. 5:6,"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." 1Jno.5:3 says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments." In jas. 2:23,"And the Scriptures was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."

Jesus said in Jno. 15:14,"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."(what are his commandments?) Jesus said unto His disciples in Matt.28:18-20,"...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..." And we read that Jesus prayed for his disciples in Jno. 17:20 saying,"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word:"(Apostles teachings.)

So to do His Commandments, is to obesrve and do whatsoever Jesus has commanded the Apostles to teach. Paul says in Gal. 1:12 that he spoke by the revelation of Jesus Christ. And in 1Cor. 2:10, "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit:"(those few times Paul mentions his own ideas, he warns, like in 1Cor. 7:6,"I speak this by permission and not of commandment.") Paul also speaks of obedience unto righteousness, saying in Rom.6:17 18, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

In Romans the 4th cahapter, Paul brings out that a man is Justified by faith without the deeds of the Law, without the works of the Law...saying in verse 3,"For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Verse 11,"And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:" Verse 12,"And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being ye uncircumcised."

Heb. 11:8 speaks of Abrahams faith which he had being yet uncircumcised, that he obeyed. It reads,"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."(How did Abraham obey?), the verse says, By faith Abraham obeyed....(and this was 24 years before he was circumcised.) Gen.12:4 tells us that Abraham was 75 years old when he departed out of Haran, and came to the Land of Canaan..And in Gen. 17:24, that Abraham was 99 years old, when he was circumcised.(a space of 24 years.)

Submitted in Love,
Brother H. Stolnake
L Box 193
Gackle, N. Dakota 58442

****

Very happy to announce that Yakima, Washington has two new members in their congregation. Robert and Wilma Farley, of Selah, baptized Jan.12,1975.

Congratulations! Brother & Sister Jerry McCay have another addition. Their third son was born March 13,1975 8 lbs. 6 oz. Brent Anthony Jerry and Meg's other sons are,David and Danny.

OBITUARIES

Word has reached us that Brother **J.C. Whitely** passed from this life in Feb.1975. No further information at this time.

Sister Luella Adel Stark was born Sept. 21,1883 in Mississippi, the daughter of Mr.& Mrs. Nail. She came to California in 1932, where she resided until her death March 16,1975 in Modesto,California at the age of 91yrs. 5 mos.and 25 days.

She attended the congregation at Glenn and Dallas as long as she was physically able to do so.

She is survived by 8 children: Wallace Stark of Clarkton, Mo., Dalton Stark, and Sadie Thornton both of Modesto, Ada Kelly of Bellflower,Cal., Effie Howard of Denair, Eleanor Guyer of Hughson,Cal., Jeffie Starnes of Petaluma,Cal. and Tommie Henderson of Oakdale,Cal. She was the sister of Tabitha Bailey of Heber Springs, Ark. Also surviving are 3 grandchildren and 81 great-grandchildren.

Service were conducted March 18, 1:00 P.M. in the Sales Brothers Funeral Chapel by Brother J.D. Logan & interment at Ceres Cemetery, Ceres,Calif. just south of Modesto.

****

MEETING DATES

BROKEN BOW,OKLA.JUNE 1-8 Charlie Burt,Lorenzo,Texas.

YAKIMA,WASHINGTON.June 22-29Jerry Perigen,Bellflower,Cal.

PORT ORCHARD,WASH.June 29July 6-Al Way,Bellflower,Cal.

BELLFLOWER,CALIF. July13-20 Clifton Brockman,Chico,Cal.

STILWELL,OKLA. July 20-27 Howard McCoy,Yakima,Wash.

DELTA,COLO. Delta Camp Meeting August 3-10

FURNISH CANYON,COLO. Aug.10-17Clud Perigen,Bellflower,Cal.

STANTON,TEXAS,July 6-13 Ken Baldwin,Delta,Coloredo.

Are you having a meeting this year? If so, where is the date and speaker on the list above. If not, WHY NOT?? Speakers are available and waiting for a call.Plan NOW, then send it in as soon as possible, many are waiting so they can plan their vacation to go to meetings. If you have had your meeting this year and have not sent in the report of it, PLEASE do so NOW.
Time passes very quickly and if some things are put off they may never get done. Time is very valuable.

FINANCIAL REPORT

JAN. 7-1974 through MAR. 15-1975

1/15/74	Standard Office Equip.Stencils	11.08
2/11/74	Postage Dec. & Jan.	52.00
3/19/74	Postage Feb. & Mar.	48.00
3/16/74	Wardens Office Equip. 20 rem.memo paper	55.86
4/18/74	Postage April	20.00
6/16/74	Postage & Box Rent	56.26
9/24/74	Postage Sept.	20.00
10/23/74	Wardens Office Equip.	23.41
1/3/75	Postage Jan. & Feb.	42.00
2/24/75	Standard Office Equip. Stencils	14.36
3/13/75	Postage Mar.	66.00
3/14/75	Wardens Office Equip. Mimo.paper and Envelopes	62.08
	Total Expenses	471.05

Contributions	863.00
Balance on hand Jan.7-74-	217.05
	1080.05
Less Total Expenses	471.05
Balance on hand 3/15/75-	609.00

Printed and mailed 625 papers each printing. One contribution was for $500.00 from one persom.

The variation in postage is these are a few stamps left from one mailing to another sometimes.

Any questions regarding this statement will be gladly answered to any one requesting it.

Editor and Staff.

P.S. Many, many thanks to each and every one of you who have contributed in any way. God Bless each and every one of you also. This is your paper and we hope and pray we are doing a good job for all of you out there, with your co-operation. Thanks again.

****

BROKEN BOW, OKLAHOMA

Dear Brethren:

We here at Broken Bow are doing very well except colds.

Brother Claud Watson has been ailing lately with his heart and also Brother George Stubbs has been out of Church for quite some time, but he is on the mend, and hope he can be back with us soon. Brother Farrell Wilson has been back in the hospital. He is home and doing some

better. Every one remember the Church here in their prayers.

We have two new families coming to Church, which we are very thankful for.

Our meeting starts the 1st Sunday in June until the 8th. Hope some of you can come be with us. A young Brother from Lorenzo,Texas will be teaching. Brother Charlie Burt. Sure hope to have a good meeting.

The Church at Broken Bow,Okla.

****

MODESTO, CALIFORNIA

Brethern;

Just concluded our Spring meeting, here at Glenn & Dallas Church of Christ. Conducted the last week of March, with Brother Richard Johnston of Yakima, Washington doing a very fine job, speaking each evening and both Lords' Day's. No visible results, but attendance was good. We wish to thank all the visitors from many places from Port Orchard down the west coast to Huntington Beach. Please come again any time.

We here at Moesto enjoyed Brother Johnston and his family Monica, Jeffery, Susie and Jessica. Brother Johnston is a capable speaker and worked very hard for us and the Lord. Thanks be to him and God Bless him in any future endeavors.

We have had some illness in our congregation. Most are improved at this time. Brother Bert Weakley is taking treatments weekly, leaving him very tired and weak, but only has about two more weeks to go on these treatments. Was so good to have he and Si ter Weakley in worship the first Sunday in April. Si ter Mae Johnston and Sister Clemmie Barkley are not too well these days. They are both in Convalscent Hospital and way up in years. They are missed at services by all.

We all were saddened at the passing of Sister Adel Stark March 16th, She is and will be missed by all here. A very fine,wonderful Christian Lady. More about her death on a preceding page.

Brother and Sister Al Burtis announced the engagement of their daughter Sis. Kay Burtis to Gary Kirkpatrick, they will be married Oct. 25,1975 in the First Church of Christ, Ceres, California. Sister Jewell Cadwell of the Modesto congregation is K y's Grand-mother.

Remember that any time any one is passing through this area,to stop and worship with us at the corner of Glenn & Dallas St. South Modesto or come and visit and stay in our homes for a while. We are scattered over

a number of miles in all directions from the church building. So within a radius of 40 miles you may find someone's home to visit in. We meet each Lord's Day at 10:30 A.M. and 6:30 P.M. Come and be with us. Again thanks to all who visited and helped in our meeting.

Christian Love,
Glenn & Dallas St. Church.

****

LIFE'S HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN

We may live each fleeting moment
In selfish greed and unsung fare,
But we have to make atonement
To our friends and those who care.

Life's highway is built on living
And the deeds we've chanced to blend
Whether loving, hating, giving
It's up to you and me my friend.

Life's highway is built on hating
Though the storm clouds roll away
Traveling on without regaining
Happy thoughts and deeds today.

Life's highway is built on Loving,
All along our weary way
That my friend is only Heaven
Meeting us at our close of day.

Author unknown.....

****

James Chapter 4
(Charles B. Williams)

What causes wars and quarrels among you? Is it not your different desires which are ever at war within your bodies? You desire things and cannot have them, and so you commit murder. You covet things, but cannot acquire them, and so you quarrel and fight. You do not have them, because you do not ask for them. You ask and fail to get them, because you ask with evil, selfish motives, to spend them on your pleasures.

You faithless wives! Do you not know that the friendship of the world means enmity with God? So whoever wants to be a friend to the world puts himself down as an enemy to God. Or, do you think that the Scripture means nothing when it says."He Jealously yearns for the Spirit that He causes to dwell in your hearts?" But He gives a greater spiritual blessing. He sys,"God opposes haughty people but blesses humble people." So then, submit to God. Resist the devil and he will fly from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you..