

# Bedford Bulletin

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**“GOD  
Made us  
Alive...”**

**Together  
with Christ**  
Ephesians 2:5

## How Much Does It Take to Keep You Home?

*“<sup>24</sup> And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup> 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)

It is evident, as you read through the New Testament, that coming together for worship and edification was a very important part of the disciple’s lives *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ <sup>[a]</sup>doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers...<sup>44</sup> Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common...<sup>46</sup> 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, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added <sup>[d]</sup>to the church daily those who were being saved.”* (Acts 2:42-47).

Assembling on the first day of the week was especially important to the early church and should be just as important to the church of Christ today. On the first day of the week they assembled to break bread, so we also do this as per apostolic example (Acts 20:7), and per direct command (1 Cor. 11:23-26). The first day was a time for saints to lay by in store to meet the needs of the work of the church such as

evangelism, preachers and teachers and needy saints (1 Cor. 16:1-2; Phil. 4:15-16; 1 Cor. 9:14).

Out of love Christians strive to follow Christ's commands and emulate the example of the first Christians (apostolic pattern). Are we as passionate today concerning the assembly as we were 10 years ago, 5 years ago, 1 year ago? I remember preachers preaching on a regular basis the value and importance of the assemblies of the saints. I can also remember the vast majority of brethren I met were in complete harmony with that kind of preaching and nearly every saint fought to keep weaker saints coming fearing the inevitable, falling away, which always follows when one stops regularly assembling for worship. Yet over the years I have seen many falling into the pattern of "the plethora of excuses". Why I didn't come...

Of course, there are "reasons" why a brother or sister must miss the assembly. We understand there are times when we are hindered due to sickness. Some are unable to assemble simply because of age and frailty. Others are staying home during this time of Covid-19 because their age and health would make it deadly if they were to contract the virus. These are not excuses they are reasons and good reasons. Sometimes circumstances beyond our control hinder us. Paul said to the saints at Thessalonica, "*Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us*" (1 Thess. 2:18). But what about events that are within our control? What are we choosing to do? What about the young and healthy who work

and shop, and buy gas daily and weekly? How much does it take to keep them home?



*"And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. <sup>5</sup>But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!"*

So, how much does it take to keep you home? I literally know a brother who stopped coming to worship all together because, and I quote, "The seating is uncomfortable". Again, I know of brethren who stop coming because they say, the service lasted too long. Consider a young man named Eutychus in Acts 20 (vs. 7-12) who, hour after hour listened to Paul preach the gospel. He had no comfy chair, only a windowsill. He sat so long that he fell asleep and fell to his death. Thanks be to God that Paul, by Christ's power, healed him. This should serve as a sobering example for any of us today who might choose to skip services because of trivial issues relating to a lack of comfort such as hard pews, too hot, too cold. Remember also, in the early church they didn't have air conditioning, heating, running water, sound systems or indoor plumbing etc.

# Knowing & Doing God's Will

Proverbs 11:14

How much does it take to keep you home? For me, saddest of all, is when brethren excuse themselves from assembling because their prideful attitude, they have deemed a fellow Christian or Christians too imperfect or flawed. Considered the powerful example of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector in Luke 18:9-14. First, you have a very conceited, prideful man who had the gall to thank God that he wasn't like other men, "sinners", as though he were somehow without a flaw. Not possible in this life: *"9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. 10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God"* (Rom. 3:9-11). Brethren we must be humble like the other man who was so aware of his own failings that he could not lift his eyes toward heaven, but rather prayed to God for mercy. Jesus tells us that it was that man who went home justified. Nobody who comes through the door to worship is perfect, not the elders, not the preacher, not the deacons, not me, and not you! We need to love Christ and each other more than our excuses.

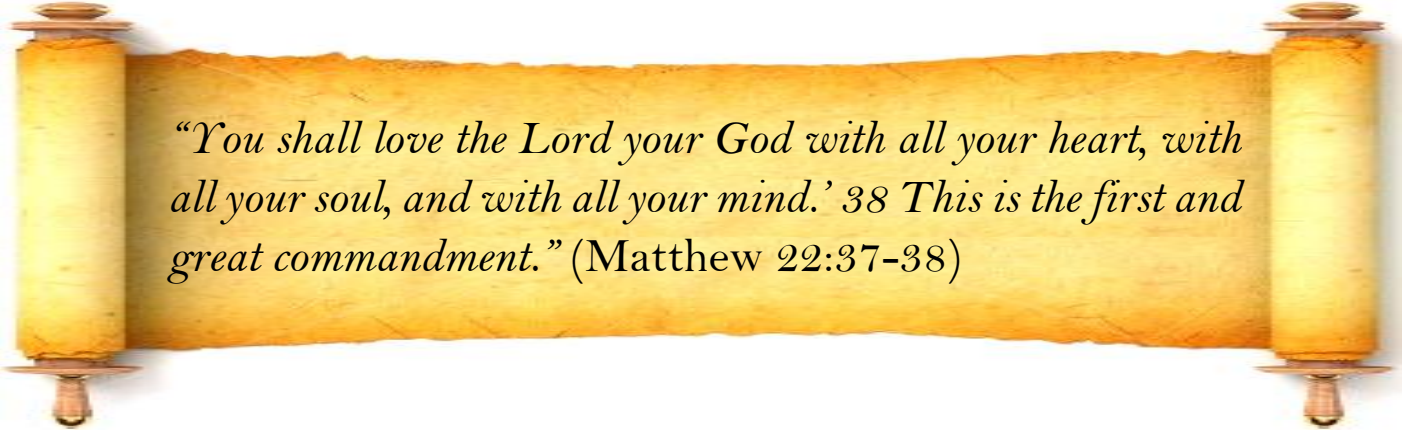
How much does it take to keep you home? Could it be that there is something more exciting happening at the time of services? Maybe you, like those in Jesus' parable in Luke 14:16-20 have something more important to do than to come to the assembly? It could be that your friends made plans to be with you, or that your the children have a game, or there is something on the telly? Make no mistake, if this is your pattern, perhaps it is time to consider what really is your top priority? Remember, *"...lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Matthew 6:20-21).

How much does it take to keep you home? What if the government decides to order us to stop worship altogether, will that be a reason not to worship God? That has not happened, yet many are forsaking the assembly as if the order had been given. Given all that has happened this year with the COVID-19 virus, that scenario is not impossible. If it did come, will we quietly comply, or will we take a stand like the apostles and choose to obey God rather than men? (Acts 4:19-20; 5:29). Mark records a time when a paralytic could not get close to Jesus because, *"...many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door..."* (Mark 2:2). Mark said, *"Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was*

*carried by four men. 4 And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd...*” (Mark 2:3-4a). The paralytic could have said it is too much trouble and just go home. But remember what happened? “...*they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying*” (v.2:4b). What great determination to see Jesus! What a great example for us all. But, instead, many just stay home if an obstacle presents itself. Someone has a runny nose, so they say, “I stayed home because of my love for the brethren, I didn’t want to ‘pass on the love’”, and that is an excuse. How about this instead: I love the Lord my God with all my heart, mind, strength and soul, and so I will assemble and worship as He commands, but I will keep from hugging, shaking hands and keep my brethren safe. What if we lost the key to get into the building? Would we break in and fix the lock another day? Would we seek another place to worship? Will we be like that man?

We had a sermon not long ago, “When the Wall is not Enough” about choice. We must not say, anxiety, or fear, or situations control us, because they cannot. We can however choose to let anxiety control us, choose to let fear control us. Only when we choose to let worldly situations control us can they have dominion over us. Brethren chose faith over fear, chose the power of Christ over every weakness, chose to obey God rather than men, and chose to allow God to be in control, not man, and not the devil. These things are under your control, choose rightly. Do not ever choose to let something keep you from the assembly, and worship.

In Love  
dave



*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment.” (Matthew 22:37-38)*

**Our faithful Creator** is worthy to be praised in this assembly. All praise to Him who reigns above in majesty supreme! He gave His Son to die, for all mankind, that He might redeem all. Our blessed Redeemer suffered and died for our sins and is now risen and sitting at the right hand of God as Head of the church. Let us offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, knowing that He is the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him. (Hebrews 5:8-9) *“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”* (Isaiah 6:3)

### Times of Our Services

Sunday Morning Bible Study	9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship	9:50 AM
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:30 PM

### What Must I Do to Be Saved?

1. Hear the gospel -----John 6:45; Romans 10:17
2. Believe the gospel -----John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6
3. Repent of sins -----Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30
4. Confess Christ -----Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized -----Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38
6. Remain faithful unto and until death -----Revelation 2:10; Matthew 10:22

*Please  
come visit us*