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It's Time for Fellowship

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” Psalm 133:1 KJV

It's hard to get people to go to church these days. Some argue that there are just too many activities to choose from—church can't compete with sports, homework, and, you know, sleep. Others blame technology and convenience. Why go to church when you can get the sermon online and listen at your leisure? Despite these challenges, time crunch and technology are not the root causes for a dwindling attendance. People have been avoiding their family members—both earthly and heavenly—for ages. Long before social media and inconvenient sports schedules, the author of Hebrews wrote: “let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near” (Hebrews 10:25)

The Hebrew author was explaining how to persevere in the faith, how we can keep from falling back into old, sinful routines. It appears that even in the early days of the church people had a tendency to drift away from the fold. They found their own reasons to not meet up. I'm sure they were seemingly good ones, like travel, health, family concerns, money problems, etc. But their absenteeism correlated with losing their way, prompting the author to include “attendance” as a strongly suggested factor for maintaining a steadfast faith.

As humans with a sinful nature, we have a natural inclination to burn bridges. We tend to neglect one another, and cause dissention and division. The New Testament writers were constantly admonishing their readers to get along and play nice. Maybe they sound like your mother: “Love one another” ([1 John 3:11](#)). “Look after each other” ([Acts 2:45-46](#); [James 1:27](#)). “Forgive” ([Ephesians 4:32](#)). “Don't cause trouble” ([Galatians 5:19-20](#)).

As Christians indwelt by the Holy Spirit, our faith should bring us together—not tear us apart. God intentionally built His church with the power of relationship, and it's how His church continues to grow today. I invite you, you invite him, he invites her. **It's a delicate chain of human interactions that calls for our participation and compassion.** There's no participation requirement to make the grade as a Christian. But think, how can we love our neighbors, Christian or otherwise, if we are never in their presence? We are family, and we cannot love one another, much less anyone else, from a distance.

Of course, there will be times when life prohibits faithful attendance—health and other circumstances may leave us stranded for a season. They can be challenging times, and local brothers and sisters in Christ ought to be vigilant in caring for their church family members in extenuating circumstances. But as much as it depends on us, we need to get out the door and go. **Amen.**

Charles F. Stanley

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, 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, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:18 – 20

