

Studies in Christianity Christian Worship #3

S#1.

What Constitutes an Assembly

S#2.

Text : **Leviticus 23: 1-8** ; **Hebrews 10: 23-31**

A. Wherever or whenever it is done, worship honors God for who He is.

S#3.

1. It is an expression of one's heart to God, not just performing acts of worship.
2. One can express his heart for God in many ways and many places.
3. However, God requires that all Christians assemble weekly with their church family.

Heb. 10: 23 – Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, **S#4.**
for He who promised is faithful; **24** and let us consider how to
stimulate one another to love and good deeds, **25** not forsaking our
own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging
one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

B. Last week we observed that we must assemble on Sunday.

1. (**Acts 20: 7**, **I Cor. 16: 2**)
2. However, the required Sunday assembly does not eliminate additional days.

C. No matter what the day, there are days when we can't worship.

S#5.

1. These are time that we especially NEED the assembly to be encouraged by others.
2. Christians worship daily as part of their lifestyle.
 - a. Sometimes worship just happens ... motivated by life events.
 - b. There should be a time set aside each day for worshipful meditations.
3. We must structure our lives to make daily worship possible.
 - a. We must set daily worship as our **goal**.
 - b. We then adjust our **priorities** to accomplish that goal.
 - c. One of those priorities is our **diet**. (*Spiritually, we become what we consume.*)
 - d. As the Apostle instructed, we **set our minds** on thing above.
 - e. And fundamental to success is that we develop an **active body life**.

D. This lesson will consider the question, “What constitutes an assembly ?”

S#6.

1. To willingly forsake the assembly is sin.
2. Must we assemble on Sunday evening or Wednesday evening ?
3. Is our singing or a gospel meeting an assembly ?

I. An assembly of the church can be different things.**S#7.**

A. In the Old Testament when God called an assembly of His people it was called “an holy convocation.” or a holy assembly.

1. **Lev. 23 : 1** – The Lord spoke again to Moses, saying, **2** "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ' The Lord's appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations — My appointed times are these: **3** ' For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work; it is a sabbath to the Lord in all your dwellings. **S#8.**

2. Some Holy Convocations were on the Sabbath, but work was forbidden on **ALL**.

3. Holy Convocations (assemblies) did not have to be observed on the Sabbath.

- Exod. 12: 16** – On the first day you shall have a holy assembly, and another holy assembly on the seventh day; **no work** at all shall be done **on them**, except what must be eaten by every person, that alone may be prepared by you. **S#9.**

B. An “assembly” is not determined by size.

1. The context is conflict resolution, but Jesus said He was with 2 or 3.

Matt. 18: 20 – For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst. **S#10.**

2. Most congregations start off very small.

3. There were house churches in the N.T.

- a. **Col. 4: 15** – Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and the church that is in her house.

b. *Compare :* **I Cor. 16: 19** ; **Rom. 16: 5**

II. The Hebrews 10 text does not specify an assembly on a specific day.**S#11.**

A. Notice the text.

1. **Heb. 10: 23** – Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, **S#12.** for He who promised is faithful; **24** and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, **25** not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

2. Some understand “**the day drawing near**” to be Sunday, I don’t necessarily agree.

3. The New Testament church had family life beyond the Sunday assembly.

- a. They had daily fellowship.

Acts 2: 46 – Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, **S#13.**

- b. **Acts 6: 1**– Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. **S#14.**

c. Sighting these passages, some denominations still have nightly services.

B. All Christians should agree that our assembling includes Sunday. **S#15.**

1. **BUT** ... Does it also include Sunday evening services ? *If not why not ?*
 - a. When we gather on a Sunday evening is it not to worship the same God ?
 - b. Those who had to work need fellowship and encouragement.
 - c. Sunday evening is still the Lord's Day. (*It's a day to renew our bonds w/ God.*)
 - * d. **In the 1st century most worship services were held at night after work.**
Having Sundays off work today is a result of the Christian influence.
2. Is 90 minutes or an hour on Sunday morning enough ?
 - a. How would your spouse react to *"I hugged you this morning, that's all you need."*
 - b. Worship isn't about punching one's ticket so he can get on with HIS day.
 - c. We are becoming like those about which Paul warned Timothy. **S#16.**
II Tim. 3: 5 – ... **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power;**

C. What about other times ? Can they be considered "assemblies?"

1. The further away from Sunday morning one gets, the smaller the "assembly"
2. Sunday evening is often only 50% of Sunday morning.
3. Wednesday evening is very often 50% of Sunday evening.

D. Assemblies other than these depend on the attraction.

1. The most successful attracter is food.
2. Guest speakers are good attracters.
3. Entertainment is a great attracter.

III. What makes an assembly a "Holy Convocation" **S#17.**

A. Let us consider three scenarios and ask if each is a "holy assembly." **S#18.**

1. It is so hot a family goes to Dairy Queen (DQ) seeking a air-conditioned place.
 - a. When they arrive they find another family from the congregation there.

- b. While they are there, yet another large family comes into the DQ.
- c. There are now 7 adults and several older children. **All are Christians.**
Is this and assembly or a “holy convocation” of Christians? (No, it’s neither)
- 2. 2nd ... An elder, Ole Bro. Redd, is turning 70 so he invites the whole congregation to join him in celebrating his 70th birthday in the function room at the DQ.
 - a. All of those attending are members of the church.
 - b. One of the elders gives a short spiritual message and leads a prayer of blessing.
 - c. The whole church was urged to attend. All those attending are Christians and more than half the congregation is there. The gathering is having spiritual activities.
Is this and assembly or a “holy convocation” of Christians? (No, it’s neither)
- 3. 3rd ... The elders announce that the church will meet at the DQ on Tuesday evening for supper and then we will pray together for Ole Bro. Redd’s surgery.
 - a. The whole congregation was urged to attend and most of them did.
 - b. All the men are praying for Ole Bro. Redd’s recovery.
 - c. Children are not invited to this gathering.
Is this and assembly or a “holy convocation” of Christians? (Yes ... Why is it?)
- 4. The 3rd one is an official function of the church so it is an assembly of the church.

B. God requires that we meet on Sunday.

S#19.

- 1. We have the precedent set by church supervised by Apostles.
Acts 20: 7 – On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.
- 2. The Apostle of God gave instructions for a weekly Sunday assembly.
I Cor. 16: 2 – On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.

C. How can we be required to attend assemblies that God did not require?

S#20.

- 1. God ordained elders to RULE over the local flock.
 - a. **I Tim. 5: 17** – The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. **S#21.**
 - b. **I Pet. 5: 1-2** – Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, **2** shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; **S#22.**

2. As Christians we are commanded to OBEY the elders.

a. **Heb. 13: 17** – Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. **S#23.**

b. Compare : **I Cor. 16: 15-16**

D. God ordained elders to “rule” over us and give account for our souls.

1. Christians are commanded to obey their elders and be cooperative.
2. If the elders call for an assembly of the church, it is within their authority to do so.
3. When the elders call for an assembly of the church, it is the Christian’s duty to obey.
4. Therefore, failure to attend that assembly is covered by **Heb. 10: 23-25.**

IV. It’s all about hearts.

S#24.

A. Remember : Worship is an expression of one’s heart to God.

S#25.

B. Most assemblies are an opportunity to worship God.

1. We express our heart to God in the activities of the assembly.
2. We have opportunities to encourage the brethren while in the assembly.

C. The Sunday assemblies are for the purpose of remembering Jesus.

1. We may remember Jesus in other assemblies in other ways.
2. We may conduct others assemblies for other purposes :

S#26.

- a. Prayer meetings.
- b. Praise meetings ... singing, person praises
- c. Problem solving meetings : *Roof off of church house, member needs help*

D. The points are :

1. We don’t have to have the “five acts of worship” at every assembly.
2. The elders have the right / responsibility to call assemblies on any day.
3. For us to refuse to attend any assembly they call is the refuse the Holy Spirit’s directions given in Hebrews 10.

CONCLUSION :

The praise of the Christians is echoed in Psalm #122

Psa. 122: 1 – I was glad when they said to me,
Let us go to the house of the Lord.

S#27.

S#28.

Lesson Text :**Leviticus 23: 1-8**

1 The Lord spoke again to Moses, saying, **2** "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ' The Lord's appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations — My appointed times are these:

3 ' For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work; it is a sabbath to the Lord in all your dwellings.

4 'These are the appointed times of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them. **5** ' In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the Lord's Passover. **6** 'Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. **7** 'On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work. **8** 'But for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the Lord. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.'"

Hebrews 10: 19-31

19 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, **21** and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **22** let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. **23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; **24** and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, **25** not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, **27** but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. **28** Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. **29** How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? **30** For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." and again, "The Lord will judge his people." **31** It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.