

Giving an Answer (I Peter 3:15) *Conflicts Over "Attendance"*

Answer the following false positions:

1. "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as is the habit of some, but rather **encouraging** one another all the more as you see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). This is the only passage commanding going to church. Are you encouraged when you go to church? If so, great! If not, this passage in Hebrews 10:25 is somehow missing your situation.

Encouraging one another in the assembly: For many this has seldom happened. The hard-line Churches of Christ have a tacit agreement:

- Never say anything real or intimate in a Bible study or sermon.
- Make sure everything said has been said many times before.
- Make sure most of the guilt dealt out in the sermon is aimed at people not in attendance or not members of the Church of Christ.

Much of the guilt dealt out in lessons and sermons is aimed at those who have left the Churches of Christ, with the effect that anyone who leaves knows what they will get after they are gone. One of the reasons members of the hard-line Churches of Christ find it so difficult to leave is that they honestly believe they cannot miss a church service. So on Saturday night or Sunday morning they get the yellow pages out and search through all the listings hoping that there will be one that will be okay to meet with. But there isn't one, so they go back to the discouraging church they are stuck with until they completely burn out (<http://ex-churchofchrist.com/unbiblicalCoC.htm>)".

2. "Some Christian denominations impose coercive attendance requirements on members. Members are expected to attend every time the church doors are open. Services are held on Sunday morning, Sunday evening, midweek service, special meetings, evangelistic outreaches and "revival" meetings. These commitments become so numerous that members are doing some church function every day of the week. The brainwashing technique used here is to keep the members swamped with church activities so they cannot participate in any activity outside the church. The mood in the church office almost becomes paranoia. The church officials are afraid the members will learn something about the Bible from outside the church. Reading this web page would be strictly forbidden in most churches" (<http://www.biblelife.org/bondage.htm>).

3. "I just don't get it. In your article you said that if people aren't at every service then the church must withdraw from them. Hebrews 10:25 is talking about people who stop going to church altogether, not those who miss a few times here and there because they're busy with other things like work, school, or urgent family matters. Who are you to judge that? So what if someone just needs to sleep on Sunday morning or has to work Wednesday night. Didn't God even rest? Don't we have to provide for our families? You are a legalist with your teachings" (Beth Johnson; Email to Brian A. Yeager; 12/05/2004).