

262. Why Should All Christians Join a Truly Christian Congregation?

And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.
Acts 2, 47.

In the Bible our attention is often called to the fact that all the people, the entire congregation, serve the Lord. And this is the express will of God. Christians should not separate themselves from their fellow-believers, but unite with them for joint worship and work.

The visible Church is that organization in which the Gospel is preached and the Sacraments are administered, and in which continually children of God are born as dew in the morning. It is sad to think, therefore, that the number of those who are not church-members is so large. A large proportion of the inhabitants of our country are non-church-members. They cannot be induced to join a Christian congregation. I will not join the church, says one; for if I do, I shall have to pay for the support of the ministry and for missions. Another says: If I join the church, I shall have to be regular in my attendance, and I don't want to bind myself. Still another says: If I join the church, I shall have to be too careful, or they will continually admonish me. I prefer to be my own master. Sometimes people refuse to join a church because there is strife and discord among the members, and they do not want to have anything to do with such a church.

These are the reasons most commonly given why some people refuse to join a Christian congregation. A congregation is in duty bound to plead with such and to endeavor to persuade them to labor in the vineyard. Surely a congregation asks no unfair thing when it invites those to whom it furnishes the Bread of Life, who bring their children to its altars, where they themselves, too, receive the Lord's Supper, to become active members and help it bear its burdens. To frequent a church and to refuse to join it is clearly inconsistent, selfish, and ungrateful. And it is a most dangerous practise, for it tends to ruin a congregation, and it is, to say the least, a sin of omission on the part of such people.

Prayer.

I pray Thee, dearest Savior, do Thou sanctify me by the Holy Ghost and the blood Thou hast shed for me that I may henceforth earnestly guard against all manner of sins, keep my body and soul unspotted, and serve Thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life. Let me not shirk my duties or leave the administration of the affairs of my church to a few. Let me always bless and thank Thee in the congregation, presenting myself to Thee as a living sacrifice. Amen.

That as true Christians we may live
Or die in peace that Thou canst give,
To rise again when Thou shalt come
And enter our eternal home.

There shall we thank Thee and adore
With an the angels evermore.
Lord Jesus Christ, increase our faith
To praise Thy name through life and death.

This devotion is one of 318 taken from *Daily Bread* by F. E. Pasche, published by CPH in 1926, but now in the public domain. They have been copied and reformatted by Rev. Bruce G. Ley and made available for distribution by pastors and missionaries.

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