

Pastor Sean's Blog

Proclaiming Christ through a blog in the 21st Century

<http://pastorseansblog.blogspot.com/>

CHURCH ATTENDANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

Would you agree or disagree with the statement that it is a SIN to stay home from the corporate assembly of the church of your membership? Obviously there are numerous legitimate reasons to miss church—sickness, work etc.—but what about absence when there isn't a legitimate reason?

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Notice the middle phrase "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is"

The Bible is clear here. We are not to forsake assembling together as a church. We are not to miss church. We are not to be absent. We are to attend. We are to come to church.

Wouldn't you say that weekly attendance is a reasonable expectation? The Sabbath occurs every seven days—that is weekly. I would submit to you that weekly assembly is the bare minimum.

Why do we call it the Lord's day? Is Sunday our day or God's day?

Is your theology man centered or God centered? A man centered theology resents any effort to impose a standard of practice upon man. The moment the preacher begins preaching on standards of behavior, conduct, biblical expectations—the legalism flags begin being waved back and forth by the crowd that resents biblical expectations.

Pastor, "I want to be absent from church without a valid reason for long periods of time and don't bother me during my absence." Is this acceptable? Is this reasonable? Not according to Hebrews 10. We are to provoke one another to good works. Provoke—like provoke a fight. Only the provocation is toward something good. Certainly corporate worship is a good thing.

Pastor, don't bother me—I love Jesus—but not so much His church. And why is that? Well, you know the preacher doesn't.....I want everything. I want salvation but I don't want to deny myself and take up my cross—now that is the American gospel.

The gospel of the 21st century is simply—what Christ expected men to do 2000 years ago—REPENT and all that stuff. He no longer expects it. Now what He is satisfied with is the articulation of a prayer and the return to a life like the world. God forbid. I believe these are the lukewarm Christians that will be spit out of the mouth of Jesus because they are NOT Christians.

You can't have your church membership if you don't come to church without a valid reason—you are deployed, you are ill, you are shut-in, but there is a valid reason why you are absent.

I don't feel like coming is just NOT an acceptable excuse. And as I read Hebrews it is my job to provoke every wayward member to get back in church.

God is NOT glorified in America when 80% say they believe in God and only 10% get up on Sundays and go worship Him somewhere.

God is mocked in America by the conduct of so called Christians. Football games are more important than corporate worship services. Don't you understand pastor, you preach every week, but the Giants are only going to play the Cowboys once this year.

What's this blog posting all about—provocation. It's about provocation. Its purpose on the eve of 2008 is to say let's get serious about God and His Church in America. Berean is going to get more serious in 2008 than it was in 2007 concerning the biblical expectation to be faithful in corporate worship and bible study.

Why are we doing that? We were focused on membership last year, can't we just give people a break this year and slack off a bit.

No—not according to the Bible, as the day approaches closer to the return of Christ we are to be more committed to corporate assembly.

Hebrews 10:25b says "and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." The day is approaching. Since the day is approaching, I must give heed to the words "and so much the more." Now if that isn't enough of a reason, let me close with another reason and observation from Hebrews 13:17:

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Pastors are the "them" of this verse. (If you are in doubt about this let me encourage you to do a study on this verse and see what you come up with.) Pastors are the ones who will give an account. I will give an account for the degree to which I provoked the members of BBC toward good works. You will give an account to God for the degree to which you obeyed.

When we work together it is a joy to be a pastor and the accounting to God is joyful—when we are at odds with pastors it is unprofitable for the rebellious Christian.

In the 21st century a blog is another way to "provoke one another to good works" but it isn't the only way. Those who refuse admonishment from non-confrontational means like this must be confronted with their sin of ignoring the church and repent or be subject to church discipline.

If all this sounds harsh and not very loving, I want to encourage you to reread the words and works of Jesus in the gospels.

Should I, as your pastor, be more concerned with your soul or your feelings? Am I in doubt? No—I know beyond a doubt what God has placed in my heart for Berean.

I know that as the day approaches for the return of Christ we need to wake-up and get serious about this thing we call the gospel!

Please answer the first question presented in this article below: