

Lesson 3 – The Call to Assembling Together

Robert Mulholland said that those growing in their faith are “in the process of becoming conformed to the image of Christ, for the sake of others.” Stop and think about what this would mean to people in the Christian church today. If everyone in the church had this passion, what would it be like to come together as the body of Christ?

This week’s lesson will introduce the topic of believers coming together as a body. This direction will be examined more carefully as the study continues. Be open to getting to know God’s plan and purpose for the church as well as what this means to you personally.

Now another challenge to memorize a verse from Scripture that will help you to be stronger in your faith. Ask God to help you choose a verse to memorize. Write that verse here.

1. Today’s lesson will look at a very important portion of our biblical fellowship study. Some cultures seem to “breed” independent people. What does God intend for His children in His church? As you open in **prayer**, ask God for His truth to help you change, that you might love Him more fully, and love your neighbors as yourself. Begin with these **observation questions**.

- Remember Jesus referred to Leviticus 19:18 when He was asked what was the greatest commandment. Jesus said the second greatest commandment was to love your neighbor as yourself. A question to ask yourself is “As a part of a church, do I practice as a pattern for living to love my neighbor as myself?” Look at the commands found in Hebrews 10:24,25. Write out the “one another” statement in Hebrews 10:24. Write out the first command that follows in Hebrews 10:25. (The last command, in Hebrews 10:25, will be examined in a later lesson.)
 - a.
 - b.
- In Paul’s teaching to the churches in Rome and Corinth he gave them specific instructions as to how they are to relate to “one another.” Read these and write out how believers are to relate in the body of Christ.
 - a. Romans 12:15
 - b. 1 Corinthians 12:25,26

Lesson 3

Sometimes we allow our own fleshly response to get in the way of obedience to God's instructions. Some might say that indifference to others keeps them from obeying the commands that you just looked at in Paul's writing. Think about this. Is there an emotional response that gets in your way of obedience? For example, I know someone who struggles with jealousy and has a very difficult time with these commands. When you believe in God's sovereignty, and His provision, then jealousy becomes the sinful response to not trusting God with what He is doing in your own life. Please stop and ask God to help you reach out to someone in the church in sincere obedience to these instructions.

- Please summarize the message that James gave to Christians in James 2:1-10.
- What is your personal response to this teaching from James 2:1-10?

2. Please examine these word studies for some of the **key words** used in today's lesson.

Strong's # and Transliteration:	Definition from Strong's Concordance, unless written in <i>italics</i>:	Use of the word in other Scriptures:
6116 Hebrew atsereth Joel 1:14	Assembly , especially on a festival or holiday, a (solemn, <i>sacred</i>) assembly (meeting). <i>Also used for an assembly on behalf of Baal in 2 Kings 10:20.</i>	Nehemiah 8:18
622 Hebrew acaph Micah 4:6	Assemble , to gather for any purpose; hence to receive, take away, i.e. remove (destroy, leave behind, put up, restore, etc.)...	Micah 2:12
3948 paroxusmos paraxusmon Hebrews 10:24	Stimulate , incitement (to good) or dispute (in anger): contention, provoke unto; from 3947 <i>paroxuno</i> , to sharpen alongside...	Used twice in the New Testament. Acts 15:39
1997 episunagoge episunagogen Hebrews 10:25	Meet together <i>ISV</i> , a complete collection; specifically a Christian meeting (for worship); (gathering)	Used twice in the New Testament. 2 Thessalonians 2:1
4863 sunago sunegmenoi Acts 4:31	Assemble , to lead together, i.e. collect or convene; specifically to entertain (hospitality): ... come together	Acts 11:26

Strong's # and Transliteration:	Definition from Strong's Concordance, unless written in <i>italics</i> :	Use of the word in other Scriptures:
4864 sunagoge sunagogen James 2:2	Assembly , an assemblage of persons, specifically a Jewish "synagogue" (the meeting or the place); by analysis a Christian church, congregation	Acts 9:20
1577 ekklesia ekklesian Acts 14:23	Church , a calling out, i.e. (concrete) a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both): assembly	Acts 14:27
4352 proskuneo proskunesousin Revelation 4:10	Worship , (derived from 2965 meaning to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand): to fawn or crouch to i.e. (literally or figuratively) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore)	John 4:20-24

3. God very carefully directed His people as to how they were to assemble together for teaching and for worship. After the building of the temple in Jerusalem, the nation of Israel was to worship God in the temple under the authority of the priests and later the Sadducees. Israel established the synagogues in their own neighborhoods. When the population of a neighborhood had ten Hebrew men, they were to start a synagogue, to provide for their community. People of the nation of Israel met in the synagogue for the reading of God's word and for teaching. The gathering in the synagogues was under the authority of rabbis as well as the Pharisees.

This system could be summarized in this way: Israel worshipped God in the temple and they received teaching and listened to the reading of Scripture in the synagogues. Psalm 42:4 reflects the attitude of those who came to worship God, "They went to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday." This word, holyday was a day of festival, a day for coming together in a sacred celebration.

One of my favorite passages of Old Testament Scripture is in Nehemiah 8. Read Nehemiah 8:1-12 to see how the people responded to the reading of God's word.

How did the leaders direct the people and why?

Summarize your insights on the "God's Intention for the Church" in the Appendix.

What does this tell you about your attitude toward coming together for the reading of God's word?

Lesson 3

4. Books have been written about the purpose of the Christian church. One way to determine the purpose is to see God's instructions to those in leadership. First look at Ezekiel 34:1-10 and think about God's design for the church by seeing how God described the work of the shepherd who would be facing judgment. What does this imply about God's design for the church? (Summarize your insights on the "God's Intention for the Church" chart in the Appendix.)

What did the shepherds allow?	What is God's design for the people?

5. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said that He would build His church and the gates of hell would not conquer it. When we look at the writing of the New Testament epistles we see how Christ intended His church to be built. The spiritual gifts are given to build up (edify) the church. God has entrusted pastors with the responsibility of building up the church.

Dr. David McCormick defines the role of pastor to include the sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding of people. Many have said that a pastor is "to lead, feed, guide and guard" the members of their church.

Please read Ephesians 4:11-16 to see what Paul taught about those who were entrusted with the role of leadership and then what this is to mean to you a member of the body of Christ. What are you to receive and be, according to this passage?

Summarize your insights from Ephesians 4:11-16, and list these on the "God's Intention for the Church" chart in the Appendix.

6. The root of the Greek word for fellowship means common. People in the church come together for fellowship and they need to recognize what they have in common. Fellowship is identifying with the body of Christ. Read Galatians 3:26-29 and think about what Christians have in common according to these verses. Write out your response to this significant teaching.

Continued on the next page.

As a review, look back at Hebrews 10:24,25a and write out what this says about God's desire for His church. Record your insight on the chart in the Appendix called "God's Intention for the Church."

Is the pattern of your life to live in obedience to Hebrews 10:24? If you believe it is, think of a time when you lived this out in the body of Christ.

As we move through this study you will be asked to review each of the "one another" commands and place these commands and a practical response to the statements on the sheet found in the Appendix called "Relating to One Another." This will help you remember what you have learned and will also provide a framework for the review lesson at the end of the study. Turn to the first sheet entitled "Relating to One Another," and think about what you have learned about the commands of Hebrews 10:24,25a.

Luke's account of *The Acts of the Apostles* shares the history of the early church. Look at Acts 2:42-47 and record five signs of the church that are shared by Luke.

The word fellowship is used in Acts 2:42. Look at how the word was used in this passage and record what you find on the "Use of the Word *Koinonia* in the New Testament" chart in the Appendix. Remember at the end of the study you will take the Scriptures where the word *koinonia* is used and write your own explanation of the word.

In the writing of the Old Testament God directed His people to assemble together to worship Him. The book of Revelation shares the importance of worship in heaven. One purpose of the church here and now is to gather together to worship God.

Continued on the next page.

Lesson 3

You might close by singing the hymn “Holy, Holy, Holy” as an act of worship unto the Lord. Do you join with the saints who adore God, as verse two declares? One way of worshiping God is to assign Him worth, privately and corporately. Privately offer up your tribute to the Lord God Almighty. Prepare your heart to join with the body of Christ in the worship of your Lord and Savior. Please close by offering a sincere prayer of adoration.

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee; Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, Holy, Holy! All the saints adore Thee, casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea; cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee, which wert and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, Holy, Holy! Though the darkness hide Thee, though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see; only Thou art Holy - there is none beside Thee perfect in pow’r, in love and purity.

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty! All Thy works shall praise Thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea; Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Reginald Heber and John B. Dykes

