

# THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

March 3

2019

## WHY MANY DO NOT ATTEND REGULARLY

It is a well known fact that in most congregations there are members who are not regular in their attendance. Some will not attend any of the Bible study classes, either Sunday morning or Wednesday night. And some will not attend any time except Sunday morning. Others are not even regular in their attendance on Sunday morning. Why does this condition exist?

I am sure that I do not have all the answers, but I would like to suggest some of the reasons that these are not regular in their attendance at every assembly.

Some do not assemble with any regularity because they have simply developed the habit of NOT doing so. Some are from religious backgrounds where little or no emphasis was placed upon the need to attend regularly. Some may have "grown up" in a congregation where they only had one assembly each week. Now, even though they are members of a congregation that meets more often, they still attend only once a week.

Others do not attend regularly because of indifference. They simply are not interested enough in serving the Lord, worshiping God or studying His word to attend with any regularity. The Lord rebukes such an attitude when writing to the church at Laodicea (Revelation 3:14ff). These need to repent before it is too late.

There are some who fail to attend all of the assemblies because of

the attitude they have toward serving God and obeying His will. These, when questioned about their failure to attend, will often reply, "*Where does it say that I have to attend anytime other than the first day of the week?*" Their attitude toward obedience and service is one of doing just what is commanded to be done and nothing more. It is true that we must not go beyond the teaching of God's word, however when it comes to serving God there is an attitude involved which causes us to do His will from a willing mind rather than out of necessity.

Jesus sets forth this truth in Matthew 5:41. Here He says, "*And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.*" The point is that we do not do just what we "have to do" or are compelled to do, but we serve (go the second mile) because we are willing to do so. Paul makes this same point when he writes to the Corinthians about the matter of giving. He notes that first there must be a "*willing mind*" (2 Corinthians 8:12) and that we must do so "*not grudgingly, or of necessity*" but cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7).

If every member would develop this attitude toward serving God I am convinced that we would see more dedicated lives and would not see the indifference and unconcern that is now so common. Individuals with this attitude do not talk about what they "have to do." Instead, they look upon each and every opportunity to assemble and worship God as a privilege rather than a burden. When individuals have this attitude you do not have to plead and beg with them to do the Lord's will. They gladly do so.

I think we can see that the real problem is not that some do not attend regularly, but is really one of attitude toward serving the Lord. If we are serious about being faithful servants we will desire to take advantage of every opportunity to worship Him and study His word. Why would anyone even claim to be a Christian and not desire to assemble with those of like precious faith to worship their God?

Brethren, let each of us examine our attitude toward serving the Lord. Are we really serving the Lord willingly; motivated by love and devotion, or are we fooling ourselves into thinking that we can be pleasing to God while trying to get by with the least amount of effort possible? Until we are able to bring about a change in the hearts of

men and women we will not be able to see much, if any, change in the actions of these men and women. To be able to hear Him say, *"Well done good and faithful servant"* we must be good and faithful servants in this life. ✍️ James Hahn



## What One Tolerates, the Next Accepts

John Wesley once wrote, "What one generation tolerates, the next generation will embrace." Both sacred and secular history have proven the truth of this assessment time and time again.

Everything from dancing to drinking, from abortion to mercy-killing, has gone from toleration to acceptance. In the home and in the church, everything from immodesty to immorality has been first allowed and then endorsed. Adulterous marriages, gambling, and other similar sins, have gone from being permitted to being sponsored. Remember when wearing shorts and attending dances were generally condemned as sinful? Now, in some places shorts are being worn to church services and dances are sometimes held in church buildings! Truly, "what one generation tolerates, the next generation will embrace."

One generation tolerated sprinkling for baptism if a person were seriously ill. The next generation accepted sprinkling for baptism as an option for everyone. One generation approved a "head" elder. The next generation appointed some elders "bishops." One generation introduced instruments of music as an aid to poor singing. The next generation demanded we worship with instruments. One generation accepted the "fellowship hall" (which, at first, was just a few tables in the basement for social meals). The next generation built gymnasiums and "Family Life Centers." One generation apologized for "hard preachers" who opposed denominationalism. The next generation saw their sons and daughters joining those denominations. One generation spoke of the need to reach out in a "nonjudgmental" way to our Catholic and Protestant friends. The next generation welcomed

Presbyterians into "our fellowship" with only a handshake. One generation spoke of congregational singing as "one of our traditions." The next generation defended choruses and choirs. One generation applauded preachers who closed their sermons without an appeal for sinners to be baptized for the remission of sins. The next generation denied the gospel plan of salvation in general and baptism in particular.

What does this say to us? What is our responsibility? *"You shall observe to do therefore as the Lord... hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left"* (Deuteronomy 5:32). *"Hold fast the form of sound words"* (2 Timothy 1:13). *"Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them"* (2 Timothy 3:14). *"Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them"* (Romans 16:17). The next time we are tempted to deviate from the word of God, let us remember that what we tolerate, our children will embrace.

✍️ Mark White



Remember, our meeting with Donnie Rader is only a month away.

### April 7-12

**Belleville church of Christ**  
5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258  
[www.bellevillechurch.net](http://www.bellevillechurch.net)

**Schedule of Services**

Sunday Bible Study . . . . .	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship . . . . .	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship . . . . .	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study . . . . .	7:00 p.m.

**Evangelist**

James Hahn . . . . .	(317) 443-1938
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