

Paul wrote that one of the effects of worshiping rightly is that the unbeliever “will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you” (1 Cor. 14:24–25). How can you fulfill this duty when you are not there? Why should visitors want to return when they see the empty seats of members who do not value their own responsibilities? It’s not just about you. You have an obligation to give, which might mean you have to give up some other competing activity or appointment.

The worship service prepares us for what we will do in eternity. Let us not forsake this little taste of heaven on earth.



— Announcements —

Those For Whom to Pray (James 5:13–18)

Carrell Arrington * Jo Byrnes * Betty Cannon * Joyce Coones
Sleatha Gore * Evelyn Griffin * Faye Kilpatrick
Gary Ogden and his family * Randy McElroy * Carl Rutter

Out of Town

Dorothy Brasiel and Margaret Maltzman are in North Alabama celebrating the graduation of one of Dorothy’s grandsons from high school.

Gospel Meeting in Cleveland, Ohio

Brother Hinds is scheduled to be away from our pulpit Sunday, June 7th. He will be preaching in Cleveland, Ohio, for the Lorain Avenue congregation the week of June 7–12. Please pray for his safe travels and a good meeting with these brethren.

Chiefland Church of Christ

Meeting at 211 NE 2nd Street in beautiful Chiefland, Florida
PO Box 2539 • Chiefland, FL 32644 • (352) 493–1242

THINGS ABOVE

“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth”

—[Colossians 3:1–2]—

May 17, 2009  Vol. 5, No. 9

www.ChieflandChurchofChrist.com

What You Miss When You Miss

By Bubba Garner • *Biblical Insights* • June 2009

Whether by phone, email, text message, or just old-fashioned conversation, one of the questions I am most often asked is, “How’s your work going?” In giving my answer, I don’t type or talk very long before mentioning the fine men of God who serve as shepherds at Southside. They make “my work” much easier.

Something I have always appreciated about our elders is that they invite the preachers to their monthly meetings. I suppose the primary purpose in this is to aid our preaching to the current needs of the congregation. But it has also given me the opportunity to see firsthand the most common concern and frustration of their work: straying sheep.

Sadly, the majority of nearly every elders meeting is spent trying to find new ways to encourage folks who don't attend the services regularly. As individuals and as a congregation, we have set goals to be more evangelistic, to look out into the fields and bring the lost to the Lord. But our own leaders can't concentrate on inviting outsiders to the services because . . . they have to devote much of their time finding out why their own members aren't coming.

If people only knew what they miss when they miss the services . . .

You Miss the Privilege of Praise

Sometimes, our language reflects that we don't see worship in this way. When invited to a Sunday morning golf game or a Wednesday night movie, a common response is, "I have to go to church." This is often said with the same enthusiasm of, "I have to go to the dentist" or "I have to get the oil changed." In other words, "If it were up to me, I'd do something else." One preacher commented that the congregation where he worked suffered from a drug problem. That is, they all looked like they had been drug through the doors every time they assembled. Worship ought to be viewed as our privilege.

Israel sang, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord'" (Ps. 122:1). That was one of their Song of Ascents, a Psalm that they sang as they climbed Mount Zion to go to Jerusalem and worship. They were glad to do it in response to all that God had done for them. How much more should we, recipients of the blood of Christ, be willing to sac-

rifice whatever it takes to commemorate His death and offer our thanksgiving and praise for His love. Remember, Jesus didn't have to go to cross for you.

You Miss the Opportunity to Overcome

The worship service is our escape from the world. It is our haven. In fact, we often pray during the assembly that the Lord will help us "put away the thoughts and cares of the world and concentrate on what we are doing." Have you ever come to services tired or worried or discouraged, feeling the weight of the world on your shoulders? And afterward, on the way to the car, you said to yourself, "I'm sure glad I came." That's what worship is supposed to do.

In the context of "not forsaking our own assembling together," the writer of Hebrews instructs, "let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds" (*Heb. 10:24-25*). That implies that one of the byproducts of assembling together is our stimulation and encouragement. When we engage in a spiritual activity with those of like, precious faith, we are assured that we are not alone in our fight. We are given the opportunity to overcome our difficulties instead of being overcome by them.

You Miss the Obligation to Give

Worship has become all about getting. "I didn't get anything out of that," says one who looked like he rolled out of bed and onto the pew. The first question ought to be, "What did you give?" What did you give to the Lord? What did you give to your fellow worshipers? What did you give to the visitor?