



SOME ENCOURAGEMENT TO KEEP
MEETING TOGETHER



“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

- Hebrews 10:24-25

“I am yet to find a good reason not to worship the Lord with His people each Lord’s Day.”

The greatest legacy my parents have given my siblings and I was to see a living faith in Jesus Christ in the day-to-day things of their lives. Nowhere was that more clear than in the way that they brought us to church Sunday-by-Sunday, every week, every year of our early lives. I am eternally grateful for this. It has had a profound influence *for good* upon my life. In fact, every other experience or opportunity that they could have provided, e.g. education or sport,

pales in comparison to meeting week-by-week with Jesus Christ and His local gathering of believers.

Why can't my faith remain at home?

At times you may think: *Isn't my faith a personal matter between the Lord and I? Why can't I read my Bible by myself? Why can't I listen to a sermon online or on the television? Am I not being fed and obeying the Lord?*

Please remember that Hebrews 10:25 tells us not to *neglect* meeting together as some were wrongly doing, but rather we are to encourage one another, and all the more, as the Day of Christ approaches. The key words are *neglect* and *encourage*. There have been times when I sincerely *wanted* to meet with other believers to worship the Lord, but because of circumstances, such as ill health or family circumstances, I was unable to. There are some people, like Joseph of Arimathea, who are secret disciples of Jesus for some reason (John 19:38). It is better that they are secret disciples than not disciples at all. However, these circumstances are different to *neglect*.

I know that what I treasure, I protect and delight in. But what I think unimportant, I neglect. A professing believer who *neglects* to meet with other believers is an unhealthy believer. The believers who are the greatest encouragement to me are those quiet, servant-hearted believers *who are there* each Lord's Day. It is not legalism to gather week-by-week, but faithfulness.

In 1722, at the age of 19 years old, Jonathan Edwards started to write seventy resolutions to govern his life. Below are seven resolutions (not in any particular order) that I have written and I invite you to consider;

- I. **Resolve: to hold the local church in high regard, as it is Christ's body.** Unlike any other club or society, the roots of every true, local gathering of believers are supernatural. It is Christ Jesus who unites us. Although the local church is neither

perfect, nor *all* that God is doing in the world, it is vital. It is not optional.

II. **Resolve: to obey the “one another” commands.** There are more than fifty “one another” commands in the New Testament that can only be followed in fellowship with other believers (e.g. Mark 9:50; John 13:34; 2 Cor. 13:11).

III. **Resolve: to remember that our destiny is worship with many.** We know that the gospel of Jesus Christ transcends *all* cultural, national, socio-economic, age and language differences. The New Testament church did not separate into different age groups or cultural groups. All worshipped God together. Worshiping at a local church with people from different backgrounds and ages is a glimpse heavenward to that great day, when singing with all our might, we will be amongst a *“great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb (Rev. 7:9).”*

IV. **Resolve: to help carry the burdens of others and live at peace with them.** I will not get along easily with every person, but that difficulty reminds me that it is Christ’s church, not mine (Matt. 16:18; Phil. 1:1). I do not choose who I worship with, since it is God who has brought us together in His Son. My Lord died for them, and so who am I to criticise harshly one so dearly loved by Him? Instead, I am commanded to live at peace with other believers and help carry their burdens where possible (1 Thess. 5:13; Gal. 6:2). Isn’t it true that the believers who have often taught you the most are those that seemed weakest. Praise God!



- V. **Resolve: to rejoice in God's covenant promises to families.** When children are crying and a flustered parent is trying to calm them, or when it is difficult to hear above background noise, I must not get frustrated. Unsettled children are a reminder of God's covenant promises, which I rejoice in (Deut. 6: 6-7; Acts 2:39).
- VI. **Resolve: to listen honestly and earnestly to God's Word.** God's best work is not done through charismatic personalities, but through faithful preaching received by open hearts. May I go with a right attitude to the Lord's Day gathering. It is best to pray as soon as I arrive.
- VII. **Resolve: to use the Spirit's gifts for the common good, and to value the gifts He has given others.** Every believer is given gifts of the Spirit for the common good. No believer has *every* gift (1 Cor. 12:7). It is the body as a whole that we esteem. In every local gathering of believers, *"the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require (1 Cor. 12:22-24)."* John Bunyan's illustration is true: in a garden there are many different types of flowers, some tall and stately, others quite tiny, but the Gardener knows and owns them all. He has put each in its proper place. The old have much to encourage the young in. The young can serve the old and honour them.

Please do not neglect the Bride of Christ: His local gathering of believers. Jesus is the Good Shepherd and His sheep hear His voice. It is obvious that as we move towards the Shepherd's voice, we cannot help but be drawn closer to other sheep. Such is His design.

"To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

- Revelation 1:5-6

