

## WHY SHOULD I GO TO CHURCH?

David Halbrook

Many people today claim to believe in Jesus and the Bible but view “going to church” as optional. Do you?

The word “church” means “an assembly.” It typically refers to people saved by Jesus (Romans 10:9; Acts 2:38, 47). It also refers to the occasion where those people assemble “as a church” to worship God (1 Cor. 11:18). Thus, “Going to church” means “Going to worship God with other Christians.”

So, whose idea was it that Christians would offer God worship together? God directed Luke and Paul to write about Christians being together every first day of the week to offer worship to Him (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2). Sometimes the church assembled on other occasions, but Christians were always together on the Lord’s Day (Rev. 1:10).

Now that you understand what it means to “go to church,” what will you do? The assembly of Christians as a church to worship God is not a human tradition—it is God’s will (Jn. 4:23). The Holy Spirit rebukes those of you who choose not to assemble (Hebrews 10:24-25). Pleasing God is the #1 reason why you should go to church. {Read next week’s article “The Lord’s Supper” at our website today—[WWW.QVCOC.COM](http://WWW.QVCOC.COM)}

-- *Editor’s Note:* I suppose it is true that years ago, many people used gather with the church because there was not really anything else to do. Today, there are obviously many things to do and even Christians choose to spend time with family, fun, or food instead of offering true worship to God. Our challenge is to be persuaded and then to persuade others (even each other) that this assembly is the result of God’s revelation (Jn. 4:23). Find this article in *Arkansas Weekly* and find someone who might need it!

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# The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

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January 1, 2012

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## ***NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTIONS*** (Stan Cox)

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

The apostle Paul determined to “*press toward the goal.*” The record of his ministry in the New Testament attests to his success in this determination. Paul was not successful by chance. He was resolute, making it his primary purpose in life to fulfill the ministry given him by God. “*So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also*” (Romans 1:15).

Every Christian made that same resolution at the time of their conversion. They determined to no longer serve themselves, rather to serve God. As Paul put it, “*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me*” (Galatians 2:20). Everyone who has been truly converted has made the same pledge by their obedience to the gospel.

It is possible, however, to falter in that resolve to serve God first. This can be seen in myriad Bible examples. The Israelites time and again turned away from God to pagan influences and immorality. Paul’s fellow worker, Demas, left his service to God, “*having loved this present world*” (2 Timothy 4:10). The church in Ephesus received the admonition of our Lord, “*...I have this against you, that you have left your first love*” (Revelation 2:4). The church in Laodicea received a stern condemnation in those same letters, “*I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 “So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth”* (Revelation 3:15-16). We are not immune to those same tendencies to falter in our service to God. For this reason it is extremely important that we reassess our commitment to our Lord often,

to ensure that we are properly serving Him. Paul wrote, *“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? –unless indeed you are disqualified”* (2 Corinthians 13:5).

If lacking in our commitment, we must change. There is no better time to make such a change than right now. A new year is upon us, and it is commonly a time where we reassess our priorities, and recommit ourselves to making improvements. Some resolve to lose weight, others to quit smoking, and others to get more exercise. Some determine to be more kind, to be more outgoing, or to be more patient. Others, appropriately, determine to better serve their God.

As victorious Israel began its occupation of the land God had promised, an aged Joshua called for a renewed commitment from them. He said, *“Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”* The final phrase should be our mantra in 2009. *“As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”*

Will you do your part to make our congregation faithful and acceptable to our Lord in the year 2009 and beyond? (<http://soundteaching.org/2009/01/06/new-years-resolutions/#more-867>)  
Editor’s note: This article from 2009 applies to us in 2012. Resolve to apply it today!

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### **CAREFUL TO ANSWER**

*Robert Turner*

When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were called before the king and faced charges of refusing to worship the golden image he had erected, Nebuchadnezzar asked, “Who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hands?” Things looked pretty dark.

But they replied, “We have no need to answer thee in this matter” (AS). The King James version reads, “We are not careful to answer thee in this matter”(Dan.3:15-16).

The thought seems to be, we will not choose our words carefully -- concerned lest we offend; we will not try to “talk our way out of” this situation. And they added, “Our God is able to deliver us” (if it suits His purposes to do so) “but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

Several years back, a preacher said John (the Immerser) “lost his head” because he

“lost his head” -- he was not tactful in his criticism of Herod. John had said, of Herod’s marriage to his brother Philip’s wife, “It is not lawful for thee to have her” (Matt. 14).

John was not “careful to answer,” someone might say. Well, he certainly was not trying to “butter up” the king. On the other hand, John and the captive Jews of Daniel 3, were very careful to maintain their faith in God and to court His approval. John lost his head, and the three Hebrews were thrown into the fiery furnace, but each gained more than he lost. We “have no need” for any man’s approval as we have need for God’s approval.

Jesus said, “Fear not those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell” (Matt. 10:28). We are not advocating crudeness! Daniel’s brethren were respectful to the king; and love for souls will forbid our becoming a bully with the truth. Shouting, stomping pronouncements of damnation are often signs of weakness, while genuine strength is accompanied by humility. But genuine strength speaks truthfully, directly and clearly, regardless of temporal consequences -- and because of inevitable eternal consequences. ([http://churchofchristnow.com/articles/general/careful\\_to\\_answer.pdf](http://churchofchristnow.com/articles/general/careful_to_answer.pdf))

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### **ONE THING I KNOW**

*James Hahn*

I have always appreciated the response of the man in John 9 when the Jews tried to pressure him into condemning Jesus as a sinner. *“He therefore answered, Whether he is a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see”* (John 9:25). I wish some of my brethren would have the same attitude this man had. There is an attitude manifested by many that says “if you don’t know everything you can’t be sure about anything.”

We should be humble and recognize we can be wrong. This why we need to constantly study the word and examine the things we believe and practice in the light thereof. However, I do not believe this humility demands that we accept anything or everything that comes along or that we accept the position that we just can’t be sure or definite about anything.

I may not know everything but there are some things I know to true and I am not ready to leave or compromise these truths simply because there are other things I do not know. We must continue *“contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 3). Paul said, *“I am not ashamed, for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day”* (2 Tim. 1:12).