

## Meeting Together

Written by K B Napier

Thursday, 22 January 2015 16:13

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Christians are urged to meet together and this is adequately shown in scripture. The trouble is, many today meet for the wrong reasons, and assume that what they do is reflective of God's will. Some refuse to meet those in their same local church. Or, they refuse to meet with anyone who belongs to a different local church (whose members are saved). On the other hand, a few will not gather together because they believe the reason for meeting is unscriptural.

So, below is a summary of the call to meet together, with meanings.

### Hebrews 10:25

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

“Assembling” in this text is *episynagōgē*. It means to gather together in one place. The reasons for gathering can be varied. Unfortunately, a ‘church meeting’ with its services, etc., is taken to be the format we should follow, though I disagree, because any format becomes rigid and formalised, if not legalistic. The emphasis is simply on fellow believers gathering together as Christians, to share their life experiences and to teaching each other, because time is short. No other reason is given in this particular verse.

Other reasons for meeting together are found in different texts. For example, when we meet together we can encourage each other to profess faith publicly (verse 23). When together, we can urge each other to perform good works and to show Christ's love (verse 24)... though many ‘Christians’ show neither. Worship (see article defining what this means) is usually much maligned or misconstrued! Worship is necessary and can take on many forms. We may worship during our normal Sunday meetings, or any other time, for we should always be in an attitude of worship!

Thus, on Sundays, we can meet for any number of reasons. I urge readers NOT to follow a strict pattern, because it then fossilises into a meaningless format, with hearts made cold and unwilling. (You are welcome to have a copy of what we do on Sundays). The usual format is not commanded, nor is it usually beneficial!

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We can meet together to witness a baptism. It is necessary for witnesses to be present, because it shows others what our spiritual intentions are. Another reason to meet is communion, often called the “Lord’s Supper”.

To meet for communion is a command of Jesus (see last supper). However, no set time is given, and no set number of communions. The number of communions in any year depends on the prompting given to a local church. How the meeting is expressed can be varied, but should NOT be ‘headed’ by anyone in particular, e.g. elder/pastor, etc., because all are equal.

We may follow the words given in 1 Corinthians 11:20 onwards. Those who have an argument against a fellow believer should NOT take communion until it is sorted out (verses 27-29). Communion, in reality, should be part of a general light meal, as is evidenced in the New Testament and early church history. However, communion should not be an excuse to scoff food... if a person is hungry he must eat his fill at home. And when we meet for a meal (verse 33) we should take time to speak with each other and enquire into their wellbeing. Having a meal together is, then, a reason to meet together.

In short, there can be many reasons to meet, and this is to be encouraged, for fellow believers can strengthen each other, and can unburden their woes and troubles in an atmosphere of love and help. But, few local churches practice this, and so many of them are sterile and unloving. Or, people meet in favourite groups (cliques), ignoring everyone else... a widespread malady.

Christians can meet anywhere at any time. They can meet in their homes, or in a formal ‘church’ building, or at a different venue, or even at the seaside, in a park or anywhere else (my brother, when he led a local church, had weekday meetings of members who attended, say, a gym together, or a meal, etc.). This is because a ‘meeting’ can be for biblical teaching, worship (which has a huge number of meanings; see article on this), or even for recreation. Christians can go to a lovely village, or to an historic castle. They can attend an orchestra event. Many kinds of meetings are possible! The reason for meeting together is to be with like souls, which, today, is very rare.

Do not forsake meeting together. For myself, I finally refused to attend prayer meetings, for very scriptural reasons. But, Bible studies are fine. Examine this topic for yourselves and get to understand what meeting together really means... it is far, far more than indulging in the usual ‘sandwich’ of activities experienced in most churches! (This article is a very bare outline – any questions, just ask!).

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