

Where Were You?

Invariably on any occasion when the church gathers together some who should be present aren't there. One looks around to see who is and isn't present, only to notice someone's absence. The fact that someone isn't there creates questions. "Where is he?" is the first question. Secondly, "What might be wrong with him? Is he sick, out of town, having to work?" or a host of other questions that consider legitimate explanation for his not being present. If such reasons don't answer the question, other questions likely arise like, "Why doesn't he take church service seriously, or "Is he spiritually weak and in danger of falling away?" These questions create more concern and can be distressing to those interested in his welfare.

Most Christians who make it a point never to miss church often comment on how strange they feel if they have to. Sometimes sickness makes one stay home on Sunday. Does it feel strange to be at home on Sunday mornings? Most of us could count on both hands how many times in our lives we were not in church from 10:00 to 12:00 on Sunday morning. It just feels strange. Sometimes situations arise when traveling or some other scheduled interruption that it is impossible to be present at church. Recently I was "stuck" at the airport on a Sunday evening. I watched the time of services come and go, feeling very much out of sorts not having been there. It was obvious from the crowds around me that not everyone feels out of place not being in church. Most people in our world don't even give it a thought.

Maybe our own people have found that the world goes on outside the worship assemblies, and maybe they like that world better. That probably explains why many choose not to be present.

Church services are just four hours of the week, a week made up of one hundred sixty-eight hours. It's not like God expects all of our time. If we can't make a conscious decision to concentrate our time and energies to Him and His people for only four hours (continued)

Things "Supposed"—5

As we have seen in our previous studies, the word "suppose" in its various forms appears 24 times in the New Testament and is thus translated from eight different Greek words. We continue our study of some of these instances in which men "supposed" something to be so and found out that it was not. Having looked at the past tense of this word, we now turn our attention to it as it is used in the present tense.

II Samuel 13:32: [Note: Interestingly, this is the only instance of this word in any of its tenses in the Old Testament.] *"And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord **suppose** that they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar."* These words followed the rumor that was told David that Absalom (David's son) had killed all of David's other sons (II Samuel 13:30, 31). In actuality, Absalom had killed only Amnon. The reason for his doing so was that Amnon had raped his sister Tamar (two years before) and Absalom had held a grudge against him ever since (II Samuel 13:1-21). Absalom had devised a plan to avenge his sister's rape. He executed this plan and had his servants kill his brother (II Samuel 13:28, 29). The rumor that David heard caused him undue grief. There was doubtless plenty of grief at the knowledge of one son's death, but how much more would his heart have ached with the knowledge that all his sons had been slain by another of his sons.

Luke 7:43: *"Simon answered and said, I **suppose** that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged."* Here is an instance in which the supposition was correct, as revealed by the Lord. Sometimes suppositions are correct, but many times they are not. Simon the Pharisee reckoned rightly on this occasion, but his correct supposition apparently did not lead him to a change of life. On this occasion the Lord forgave and praised this sinful woman who had treated (continued)

Where Were You? (continued)

of the week, what does that say about our faith? Why is it so hard for so many to do such a small thing? If our mind is the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5), what should we be minded to do? Jesus said He came to do His Father's will (John 6:38). Is that what we intend to do? If not, why not?

Where were you the last time the church met? It's an easy question, and we all know the answer.

Dennis Curd

via *The Christiansburg Chronicle*, Christiansburg, VA

Things "Supposed"—5 (continued)

Him kindly (Luke 7:44-50), but He had no such words for Simon and the others gathered on this occasion. Simon should have acted in accordance with his right supposition, but failed to do so.

Eddy

Pelican Christians

"The public health authorities of San Diego had a tough problem not so long ago. The pelicans on their beaches were starving to death by the hundreds. It seems for years the pelicans had been beneficiaries of the throw-away fish from the local fishing catch, but more recently, the fishermen had stopped this practice, and now the pelicans had nothing to eat. A new generation had arisen that had never known the simple act of walking into the water to catch their own fish, and nobody, it seemed, could 'talk pelican' to explain how easy it would be to get food. The solution was found in brining in some unspoiled pelicans from Alaska. They were placed on the beach and quickly showed the old crowd how they could get a good dinner."

Many Christians have a problem somewhat similar to the pelicans described in the story above. They have been handed their religion by parents, preachers, elders and Bible school teachers until they have failed to develop their own skills in the study of God's Word. A second-hand faith will prove to be weak when it is tested. The Bible is simple to understand if we only apply ourselves to reading it. Paul told Timothy to "*study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (II Timothy 2:15). The Bereans "*sought the scriptures daily, whether those things were so*" (Acts 17:11). Without neglecting the assembly (Hebrews 10:25), we can find a simple solution to cure this problem—increased personal Bible study at home!

Homer Anderson
Snyder, TX, via *Bulletin Digest*

"The rule that governs my life is this: Anything that dims my vision of Christ, or takes away my desire for the Word, or cramps my prayer life, or makes His work difficult, is wrong for me, and I must, as a Christian, turn away from it."

—J. Wilbur Chapman

Leaving the Lord, One Step at a Time

No one seems to take the step from a faithful relationship with Christ to unfaithfulness in one bound. A gradual departure seems to be the pattern. The following is a list of those elements observed in many we have seen leave the Lord's service in past years.

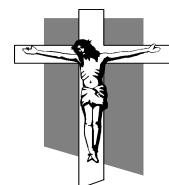
(1) Creeping absenteeism: At first, seemingly irreconcilable conflicts arose that "prevented" one from attending some services. Then, it seems that one is almost looking for the barrier to attendance. This absenteeism deprives one of the association with strong, mature Christians and keeps one from the food of God's Word that can provide strength for temptations. Soon one is able to absent himself without any prodding of the conscience. If you are one of the absentees, see if you do not observe this pattern in your own life. If you are one who is beginning this pattern, please be aware of where it will eventually lead you.

(2) Critical observations: When one finds himself continually being critical of the actions of others in the worship service—song leaders, preachers, elders, singing, those serving, actions of members around him—he can be assured it will not be long until he can find a "reason" to absent himself from those associations with imperfect people. When one begins to evaluate his own worship experience by the behavior of other participants, his own worship experience is beginning to lack some vital elements.

(3) Hyper-Sensitive: Whenever we begin to feel that every comment of a brother or sister is "against" us, we are headed toward a reason for not continuing our fellowship with them. After all, we do not have to take that kind of treatment! So we have found justifications for our departure.

Dean Fugett

Life Lines, North Beckley c/c, Beckley, WV



At His Feet

Thoughts that disturb and trouble us seldom come from God. It is generally best to put them away and throw ourselves, with increased trust in Him and mistrust of self, at His feet.

And never forget, amidst whatever may befall you—dryness, coldness, desolation, disappointment, consciousness of many faults, and of great weakness, and of lack of faith—that where love is, there God is sure to be. He never yet has suffered any soul to fall wholly from Him which, amidst all its frailties and falls, clings to Him in love. — H.L. Sidney Lear

"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13:13-16).

SICK

Myrtle Peverall has an upper respiratory infection. **Velma Vaughan**, Collin Gregory's sister, has been diagnosed w/ Parkinson's disease. **Jessica White** continues to experience severe "morning sickness" and must be re-hydrated w/Ivs every few days (the baby has a strong heartbeat and is growing). **Alvin Murray** is undergoing further treatments for his cancer.

Continue to remember: **Alissa, Mary & Lynn Anderson, Norma Biller, Betty Buckner, Willard Campbell, Marguerite Charles, Jennifer Cole, Dotty Collins, Jim Dorsett, Paul Faw, Euline Gilpin, Collin & Luetta Gregory, Patti Gwaltney, Dan Hudgins, A.C & Mickie Janney, Betty Jenkins, Martha Keith, Lisa Knott, Margaret Kratz, Oliver & Miriam Majors, Sophia Mays, Susan & Donnie Mountcastle** (UVA Medical Ctr. TCVPO, Room 4189, Ch'ville, 22908; was moved to a step-down room on Wednesday and was able to stand), **Jo Musgrove, Grace Myers, Larry Phillips, Charlie Puckett, Ruby Riffle, Murphy Scott, Annette Shrader, Laura Simms, Peggy Simpkins, Ruth Stanton, Ken Upchurch** (surgery scheduled for 7/31), **Evelyn White, E.V. & Effie Wimmer, W.J. Wood, Carlos (Papi) Yepez.**

SYMPATHY: We extend our love and sympathy to **Ed Argabright**, whose brother Bobby died on Monday; to **Jenni Sprouse** whose grandmother Mary Ann Campbell, died in FL on Monday, to **Josh Whitlow** whose grandmother died on Tuesday and to **Lori Whitlow** whose father, Gary Martin, died last Friday from complications following surgery.

MISSIONARIES: the **Pearsons, the Staffords** and the TZ2000 team.

MILITARY: **Ty Stricklin, John Shannon** and **Gabriel Hayes** who are in Iraq.

OTHER: **Madolia Rosette** has requested our prayers regarding some decisions she is facing. On-going Bible studies; "Restore 2006"

THIS WEEK AT WEST SIDE

Today: CTS/Horizons Jr. Week begins. TURN, TURN, TURN Planners meet, 4:30pm in large classroom. Happy birthday to **Walter Jenkins!**

Monday: Summer Youth Devotional, C'burg., 7-8:30pm

Tuesday: W.O.W. meeting, 10:30am Happy anniversary to **E.V. & Effie Wimmer!**

Wednesday: Bible Study, Summer Series, **Keith Hovis, Lebanon**, "What I Learned from 'Jesus Loves Me'", 7pm.

Friday: Happy anniversary to **Miles & Louise Quesenberry!**

Saturday: Men's Fellowship Breakfast, Famous Anthony's, 8am. Happy birthday to **E.V. Wimmer!**

Sunday, 7/16: "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: Sing forth the honor of his name: make his praise glorious" (Psalm 66:1-2).

ITEMS FOR STAFFORDS—July/August

Pens: Zebra (fine point), Pentel RSV (medium point)

WEDNESDAY FELLOWSHIP MEAL

July 19, 5:45pm. Menu: barbecue chicken pieces, mac-n-cheese, green beans, Asian noodle salad, dessert. Sign up on the board and pay an elder \$5 before July 16.

ATTENTION, MEN

RE: SERVING LORD'S SUPPER

*After thinking over various suggestions from our deacons, we would like this format to be followed beginning today. Those who will serve or preside over the Lord's Supper need to meet in the Senior High classroom at **10:25am** to prepare themselves to participate in this capacity during the worship service. At the appropriate time during worship, after the one presiding has concluded his remarks and offered thanks for the appropriate item, each man serving will partake of the emblem **prior to** serving the one who presides and the rest of the congregation. Each man serving should properly focus on the message of the one presiding and his prayer to prepare himself to partake "in a worthy manner" (I Corinthians 11:28), just as those participating in the congregation should be doing. This is basically the way those serving/presiding **used to partake for many years.***

We believe conduction this portion of our worship service in the above manner will give proper reverence and help fulfill the Scriptures regarding partaking of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 14:40). Our thanks to each of our deacons for your input in this important part of our worship to God. — The Elders

PICTORIAL DIRECTORY UPDATE

Work continues on the directory, and we are updating addresses, birthdates, etc. We need **EVERY MEMBER** to check the following: ♦Spelling errors, ♦birthday and anniversary dates (for each family member), ♦e-mail addresses and phone numbers (you may add extras if you wish), ♦mailing addresses and every detail for accuracy. If you want to make needed corrections on a separate paper, you may give them to **Michelle Earnhart**. Please check your information ASAP.

SEW BEE IT

Fabric, patterns, notions, batting for quilts to be sent to Africa should be given to **Kay Anderson** or **Glenna Richardson** to be sent to Hattiesburg, MS, no later than August 1. If you don't sew and would like to contribute, you may give money to **Glenna** for the purchase of thread, needles, scissors, etc.



Fishers of Men

Some seasons are more comfortable for fishing than others, but the fish are there all year round, Winter or Summer, Fall or Spring. The hungry ones will bite any time.

The Lord, Who inspired the great fisherman Paul, moved him to write, "Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season..." (II Timothy 4:2). Some versions say, "be instant" or "be ready". The Amplified Bible reads, "Keep your sense of urgency (stand by, be at hand and ready whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable, whether it be convenient or inconvenient, whether it be welcome or unwelcome)."

via The Lebanon Letter
Winchester, TN

Opportunities to Serve

July 2006

Announcements. Rob Kinney
Reader (PM). Kirk Gilpin
Preside. Fred Altizer
Serve. John Black, A.C. Janney, Charlie Puckett, Bryn Sartain
(PM) Garrett Durham, Bob Garby

Opening Prayer

7/2. Tom Duff, (PM) Luke Guard
7/9. Charles Maness, (PM) Jeff Durham
7/16. George Mellon, (PM) Ortie Boyd
7/23. Eric Earnhart, (PM) Barry White
7/30. Herbert Baker, (PM) Jerry Anderson

Closing Prayer

7/2. Charlie Gwaltney, (PM) Adam House
7/9. Jim Bush, (PM) James Cooke
7/16. Gene Benefield, (PM) Mark Brooks
7/23. Murphy Scott, (PM) Walter Jenkins
7/30. Greg Edwards, (PM) Youth

Greeters. Boyds, Duffs

Open/Close Building. Danny Guard

Care of Communion. Jean Argabright, S. Lowe; alt. Y. Mays

Song Leaders

Sunday. (AM) J. Durham, (PM) C. Gwaltney. (Wed.) P. Mays

Care of Baptismal Garments. Leah Durham

Ushers. Jim Bush, Roger Mays

Nursery. Kristie Jearls, (PM) Gloria White

Alternates. Mike Durham, Eric Earnhart

Handouts. G. Benefield, J. Bush, D. McFalls, M. Quesenberry

OUR RECORD. 6/28, 7/2, 2006

Wednesday. 136

Sunday Bible Study. 144

Sunday Morning Worship. 158

Sunday Evening Worship. 109

Contribution. \$6,289.00

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Mind Your Manners

The country boy felt somewhat awkward at the formal banquet in the big city. His tuxedo restricted his movement. His necktie interfered with his breathing. He could not figure out why he needed three forks, four spoons and two knives to eat one meal.

The child of God may experience similar emotions as he or she tries to serve the Lord. He struggles with making the right decision. She wrestles with peer pressure. He wants to fit in, not feel out of place. Help!

The Lord spoke through Paul to teach Timothy and other saints how He expects His children to behave. Our Father wants His children to engage in conduct that is holy. He expects His people to possess attitudes that are pure. He plans for us to build our lives on the solid foundation of His truth.

Two challenges faith the individual who belongs to God's family. One—to know how one should conduct himself/herself. Two—to do what he/she knows. Our Father can help us meet each of these challenges. The question is, "Will we let Him?" Think about it. Mind your manners. — Jay Hanley, via *Bulletin Digest*