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## Following Jesus -- Course A

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Instructions:

**Please take all courses in order as listed on our home page (the computer will ask!). If you have not done all the lessons of previous courses, please [click here to go to the beginning](#).**

If you have not already done so, save this lesson to your computer using the "save" feature of your browser or PDF reader. Then print out the lesson (or at least open it in your browser or PDF reader **offline** – not on the Internet). Read the lesson and **study in your Bible the passages indicated >>> Scripture <<<**. Following each passage, study each question that has a number enclosed in asterisks (\*1\*, \*2\*, etc.), and **write down your answers on paper**. Some questions include more than one number because they have more than one blank to fill in. ("Think" questions should be carefully considered for your own benefit, but your answers will not be submitted to us.) Please take your time, study each passage carefully, answer the questions honestly, and consider the applications to your own life (John 12:48; 2 Tim. 2:15).

When you have studied the whole lesson and written down answers to all the indicated questions, return to the menu for this course on our web site at [www.BibleStudyLessons.com](http://www.BibleStudyLessons.com) and click on the link for the **answer quiz** for this lesson (or simply click on the link at the end of this lesson). Follow the directions to submit your answers and receive your grade. You will then be given an opportunity to see the correct answers to the questions. Please save this lesson and the correct answers for future reference.

Then move on to the next lesson or the next course in order. **Please study all lessons in all courses in order as listed in the menus on our web site.**

Thank you for your interest, and God bless your study of His word.

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## Attending Church Meetings – Part 2

### Following Jesus -- Course A, Lesson #7

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**Introduction:**

This lesson continues our study about the importance of attending church meetings. Please review the previous lesson before continuing.

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## VI. Leadership

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Now consider principles of Bible authority and church leadership.

### A. The Principle of General and Specific Authority

Anything the church practices must be authorized in the gospel (Matthew 15:9,13; Galatians 1:8,9; 2 John 9–11; etc.). But what about acts that are not expressly or specifically mentioned one way or the other?

## Statement of the principle

**When God wants us to do a thing in a particular way, He instructs us with words that are specific or narrow in meaning.** Since we must not practice things that do not fit His meaning, He words His instructions so as to leave us no choice ("specific authority").

**When God wants to leave us free to choose from several alternative ways of doing a thing, He uses words that are more general or broad in meaning.** We must still do only what fits His meaning, but there may be various ways of doing this. We must then **make decisions** to choose a course that fits what God said to do ("general authority"). Any such choice would be acceptable.

## Applications of the Principle

In Genesis 6:14 God told Noah to make an ark of gopher wood. Metal or oak would not fit. But even though God mentioned no hammer or saw, Noah could have used such tools because he would have just been making an ark as God said.

Mark 16:15 says to go preach the gospel. We must not teach man-made doctrines, which are not part of the gospel. But "going" by car or plane would still fit the command, though not specifically mentioned.

Many other similar applications can be made. All activity must be **authorized** by God. But it need not be **specifically mentioned**, so long as it fits the meaning of God's word. So, in matters of "general authority," there are **decisions that humans must make**, so long as we are just carrying out His commands. (Please review this material in our lesson on "Divine Authority vs. Human Authority.")

Consider then decisions regarding church assemblies and how they should be made.

## B. The Principle of Leadership

In each of His institutions, God has ordained leadership so the group can work with unity and cooperation.

>>> Please read Ephesians 5:22–25; 6:1,4. <<<

\*1\* Who has authority in the home? (a) children should obey parents, (b) wives should submit to husbands, (c) both of the preceding. Answer: \_\_\_\_\_.

(Col. 3:18,20,21; Titus 2:4,5; 1 Pet. 3:1–7; Prov. 1:8; 6:20; Luke 2:51)

>>> Please read 1 Peter 2:13,14. <<< (Cf. Rom. 13:1–5.)

\*2\* How should citizens in a nation treat their rulers? Answer: Citizens should \_\_\_\_\_ to the authority of (the ordinances made by) civil rulers.

Think: If children or citizens will not follow the leaders' decisions, are they disobeying just the leaders, or are they also disobeying God?

In order for God's institutions to function, God has ordained leaders to make the necessary decisions. Others in the group must follow the decisions. When people refuse to cooperate, they are not just rejecting *human* authority. They are hindering *God's* work. Now consider the church.

## C. God's Ordained Leaders in the Church

>>> Please read 1 Peter 5:1,2. <<< (Cf. Acts 14:23; 20:28.)

\*3\* Who should shepherd and oversee a local church? (a) the members, (b) elders, (c) the Pope, (d) the church synod. Answer: \_\_\_\_\_.

>>> Please read Hebrews 13:17. <<<

\*4&5\* What should members do toward those who rule over them? Answer: Members should \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to those who rule over them.

God has ordained that elders "rule" (1 Tim. 5:17), and other members follow. This is how churches make decisions and obtain cooperation. Members may disobey only if the elders tell them to sin (Acts 5:29).

(Note that God has also given men authority in the church — 1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:11,12. So if there are no elders, the men still have authority and must make decisions.)

Think: Suppose a member refuses to follow a decision made by the elders (or men). Is he being submissive and cooperative?

## D. Applications to Assemblies and Attendance

***Consider some specific decisions that must be made regarding church assemblies.***

\* Think: Suppose a church (led by elders or men) chooses to meet Sunday at 10:30 AM for the Lords' supper, but a member says the time is a human decision that he does not have to follow. So instead he comes at 2:30 PM. Is he being submissive and cooperative toward the leaders?

\* Think: The church (led by elders or men) chooses to rent or buy a place to meet, but a member of that church says that's a human decision, so he goes instead to some other place he chooses. Is he submitting, etc.?

\* Think: Now suppose the elders or men appoint a certain **number** of assemblies each week for the church to meet for edification or praise. But a member says those are human decisions and he will come whenever he chooses. Is he being submissive, cooperative, etc.?

The church has **general** authority to meet more than once a week and on days other than the first day of the week. God has ordained leaders in the church to decide the number and times of meetings that they believe **would best meet the needs of the members**. All members should then follow those decisions in order to participate in the work God has commanded.

***A summary passage – Ephesians 4:11–16***

God put leaders in the church (v11). These men lead the church in doing God's work, so the church grows and avoids error (v12–15).

>>> Please read v16. <<<

\*6\* How many members must do their share so the body can grow and build itself up? (a) a few, (b) none, (c) some, (d) all of them. Answer: \_\_\_\_\_.

For church work to be effective every member must willingly cooperate and follow the leaders. Since much of this work is done in assemblies, it follows that **every part** of the body is responsible to arrange his schedule and be present to the full extent of his ability.

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## VII. Commitment and Sacrifice

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Christians should learn and teach God's word, praise God, and cooperate with the leaders of the congregation. But some seek to do as little as possible. Others admit they should come, but they let frivolous and minor excuses hinder them. How great a priority should attendance be?

### A. Serving God Should Be Our Highest Commitment.

>>> Please read Matthew 22:36–38; John 14:15. <<<

\*7&8\* What is the greatest command, and what will it lead us to do? Answer: We must \_\_\_\_\_ God, which means we keep His \_\_\_\_\_.

>>> Please read 1 Corinthians 15:58. <<<

\*9\* How does this describe the way we should work? Answer: Be steadfast, unmovable, always \_\_\_\_\_ in work of the Lord.

>>> Please read Revelation 3:15,16,19. <<<

\*10\* What will God do with one who is lukewarm? Answer: God will \_\_\_\_\_ the lukewarm member out of His mouth.

Improper body temperature is a symptom of sickness. Likewise negligent attendance is a symptom of spiritual disease. If one has little zeal for study, teaching, or praying, will he have much interest in attending?

>>> Please read Matthew 6:33. <<<

\*11\* What should be our top priority in life? Answer: We should seek first God's kingdom and His \_\_\_\_\_.

Think: If a person has the kind of commitment these verses describe, would he let frivolous excuses keep him from attending?

(2 Cor. 8:5,12; Col. 3:1,2; 2 Peter 3:11,14,17,18; 1 Tim. 4:15; John 2:17; 1 Cor. 6:19,20; Titus 2:11–14; Psalm 119:2–6,10,11,58–60)

### B. We Should Willingly Sacrifice to Serve God.

Some people think church meetings should always be pleasant and without hardship. Some expect a continual emotional high. Otherwise, they see no point in coming. Consider the Bible teaching about sacrifices.

>>> Please read Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 12:2. <<<

\*12\* How did Jesus feel about His sacrifice on the cross? (a) He despised the shame, (b) He enjoyed it, (c) He felt nothing at all. Answer: \_\_\_\_\_.

A sacrifice is often unpleasant, even upsetting and frustrating, but we do it because of the higher end that is achieved. (Matt. 26:36–46)

>>> **Please read Matthew 16:24,25.** <<<

\*13&14\* What does Jesus require a disciple to be willing to deny and lose? Answer: A disciple must deny \_\_\_\_\_ and be willing to lose his \_\_\_\_\_.

>>> **Please read Romans 12:1,2.** <<<

\*15\* What should a Christian do with his body? Answer: The body should be presented to God as a living or holy \_\_\_\_\_.

>>> **Please read 1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 13:15.** <<<

\*16\* What sacrifice is offered by those in God's spiritual house? (a) none, (b) praise from our lips, (c) worship should always be pleasant. Answer: \_\_\_\_\_.

Worship is often pleasant, but we should come willingly even when sacrifice and hardship are required. Christians have worshipped in catacombs because of persecution. Husbands have beaten wives for coming. If we are not willing to sacrifice, will God be pleased with our worship?

Think: Jesus gave His life so we could be saved. Should we be willing to lose an hour's sleep to come in time for Bible class on Sunday morning? Should we give up visiting with friends, watching TV, going to a ball game, etc., to come Sunday PM and midweek?

Conclusion: We "want" to worship God, not because it is always easy and painless, but because the end result is worth it. If we are having difficulty making sacrifices to attend church meetings, we should be more like Jesus. Stop focusing on what we are giving up and start focusing on the end result.

(Mal. 1:6–8,13f; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:6–15; John 16:21)

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## **VIII. Strength, Growth, and Faithfulness**

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When we understand why God developed the concept of the church and meeting together, then we will understand why we should be there for every opportunity the church gives us.

### **A. Attendance Promotes Strength and Faith.**

>>> **Please read Romans 1:12.** <<<

\*17\* How could Paul and the Romans help one another? Answer: They were encouraged by each other's \_\_\_\_\_.

We are daily saddened by the immorality and error of people around us. We may feel we are all alone. But being with Christians strengthens us and gives courage to face the world. (Psalm 119:63)

**>>> Please read 1 Thessalonians 5:11. <<<**

\*18&19\* What should we do for one another? Answer: We should \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ one another.

Studying God's word together gives strength. Alone we may fail to see our weaknesses, or we may lack strength to stand for truth, but other Christians help us do better. (Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:12,16)

**>>> Please read James 5:16. <<<**

\*20\* How can we help one another with our sins? (a) we can't help, (b) priests can forgive sins, (c) we can pray for one another. Answer: \_\_\_\_\_.

Think: If we don't come to the assemblies, will we know what other members need so we can pray for them?

**>>> Please read Ecclesiastes 4:9–12. <<<**

\*21\* What are the advantages of two being together? Answer: Two are better than \_\_\_\_\_.

We are stronger when we work together, not alone. That is why the Lord established the church and ordained church meetings. We strengthen one another and help one another be faithful. (Rom. 1:21)

## **B. Attendance Promotes Growth.**

**>>> Please read 2 Peter 3:18. <<<**

\*22&23\* In what ways should Christians grow? Answer: We should grow in the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord.

**>>> Please read 1 Peter 2:2. <<<**

\*24\* Why do babies need milk? Answer: Babies need milk so they can \_\_\_\_\_.

Think: Will Christians grow if they neglect the spiritual feeding times provided by the church?

**>>> Please read Ephesians 4:11–16. <<<**

\*25\* What can the body (church) help us do? (a) know the Son, (b) not be children, (c) not be led away by false doctrine, (d) all of these. Answer: \_\_\_\_\_.

Too many Christians try to "go it alone" spiritually. They don't realize their need to work with other Christians. But God knows that strength and growth come by being with other Christians, so He ordained group responsibilities, including attending assemblies.

## **C. A Summary Passage – the Book of Hebrews**

Note: The book of Hebrews was written to strengthen Hebrew Christians who were in danger of falling away (cf. 4:9–11).

**>>> Please read Hebrews 2:1–3. <<<**

\*26\* What danger are we warned about? Answer: We may drift away and neglect our great \_\_\_\_\_.

>>> Please read Hebrews 3:12–14. <<<

\*27\* What can help us avoid falling into sin like Israel did (see vv 7–11)? Answer: We should \_\_\_\_\_ one another daily.

Think: Assemblies exist for the very purpose of exhortation. If members value exhortation, what will they do when the church meets?

>>> Please read Psalm 95:1–11. <<<

\*28\* What should God's people do to avoid falling? (a) worship and bow to Him, (b) go fishing, (c) sleep in, (d) watch TV. Answer: \_\_\_\_\_.

Think: This passage (v7–11) is quoted in Heb. 3:7–11. What danger faces people who neglect to worship God when given the opportunity?

We now have the background to properly apply the following verse.

>>> Please read Hebrews 10:23–25. <<<

\*29&30\* What can we do to help one another avoid wavering? Answer: We can stir one another up to \_\_\_\_\_ and good \_\_\_\_\_.

\*31\* When and where do we exhort or stir one another up? Answer: We exhort or encourage one another when we are \_\_\_\_\_ together.

The context is still discussing the danger of wavering instead of holding fast (v23). To help one another stay strong, we should not forsake church meetings, as some folks do. When we neglect meetings we leave ourselves defenseless, and we are in the process of falling.

But does this apply just to one assembly per week? The **principle** taught in the context is: We need to be exhorted regularly and frequently, and the assemblies provide a major opportunity to do this. Those who want to grow and be strong will want to be there whenever the church provides the opportunity.

## Conclusion

>>> Please read Galatians 6:10. <<<

\*32\* How often should we do good? (a) once a week, (b) once a day, (c) as we have opportunity, (d) never. Answer: \_\_\_\_\_.

Think: The church has given us the opportunity to attend meetings to worship God, study His word, and edify one another several times a week. Is this "good" to do? Are you using the opportunity?

>>> Please read Ephesians 5:16. <<<

\*33\* What should we do with our time? (a) waste it, (b) redeem it (use it wisely), (c) use it to please ourselves, (d) use it to please friends. Answer: \_\_\_\_\_.

Think: Various translations say, "Making the most of your time" (NASB) or "making the most of every opportunity" (NIV). The church provides several opportunities weekly for you to worship God and

study His word. Are you making the most of those opportunities?

**Personal application questions:**

(These questions are for you to ponder. Your answers will help us understand your thinking, however they will not affect your "score.")

\*34\* When the elders in a local church schedule times for the church to worship and study, what do you believe members should do? \_\_\_\_\_

\*35\* What is your most important goal in life? \_\_\_\_\_

\*36\* Do you believe attending church meetings should make a Christian stronger? \_\_\_\_\_

**When you have carefully studied this lesson and written down answers to all the questions, [click on this link to submit your answers.](#)**

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***The Importance of the Church***

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