

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## *Old Hickory Church of Christ*

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## With Whom Will I Worship?

The question of with which church one worships is important to every Christian committed to having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). It will not do to proclaim allegiance to the truth and then choose to worship with a church that has left the path of truth.

Deciding where to worship arises when Christians move to a new area or when we travel on business or pleasure. It can also arise when a church departs from the faith in its teaching and practice and we must decide no longer to be in fellowship with it. Whatever the specific reason, deciding with whom to worship affects whether or not you will offer God true worship (John 4:23-24). While we are urged to have fellowship with and encourage those who are faithful brethren, we must not endorse by our presence and participation in worship those who have gone beyond the doctrine of Christ (3 John 5-8; 2 John 9-11).

Please study and apply these Biblical principles to decide with whom to worship:

**1. Worship with Christians** (Acts 2:42; 20:7). This sounds like a no-brainer, nevertheless, some Christians yield to the temptation to worship with denominationalists. Non-denominational services at the RV camp site or some other such installation have lured some into unauthorized worship when on vacation. We should always seek out faithful brethren with whom to worship (Acts 28:13-14).

**2. Worship where truth is taught and obeyed** (John 4:24; 1 Cor. 14:26; Acts 20:27, 32). Just because a building has a sign in front that says “church of Christ meets here” does not mean it is upholding the truth. Like the church at Sardis, churches of Christ may have a name that they are alive, but are dead (Rev. 3:1). To avoid giving your influence to a dead church it is important to investigate what a church stands for and what it practices – not just what its reputation may be.

**3. Worship where immorality is not shielded and defended.** Jesus Christ had this against the church in Thyatira: they allowed “that woman Jezebel” to teach and seduce Christians into immorality and idolatry (Rev. 2:18-23). Some churches are willing to tolerate sin among them. Why would a faithful Christian wish to worship with such a church if he or she knows this is its consistent practice?

**4. Worship where false doctrine is not taught and accepted.** Sadly, many pulpits in churches of Christ are occupied by men

who teach doctrinal error. And in most places, over time, the church accepts the same error (2 Pet. 2:2). If it were not so the church would either urge the preacher to repent of his error or finally, if he refuses, ask him to leave. When a church tolerates a false teacher in its pulpit it is having fellowship with evil. If we choose to worship with such a church then we are joining in with their sin (2 John 9-11).

**5. Worship where faithful brethren are accepted** (3 John 5-10). Some churches will not receive and encourage faithful brethren; they refuse them. Surely the faithful Christian does not wish to lend his or her voice to such a sin.

Worship must be in spirit and in truth, wherever we are and whenever we offer it. While we may worship with some who hide their sins, there is no divine approval to worship with a church that is known to tolerant sin and error (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1). Make it your aim worship with God's faithful ones.

- Joe R. Price

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## **If We Stop Walking We Become Unable To Walk!**

Up until a few months ago I walked several miles each week and my legs were strong. Then I was diagnosed with a life threatening illness and I stopped all walking. The time that I was not sitting at my computer I was reclining in my recliner. One day I discovered that I could stand no longer than a minute or so until my legs gave way and I had to sit down.

This frightened me, and I was determined to begin walking again and to regain strength in my legs. My legs hurt something terrible, but I walked and made them hurt more. Now I can walk two miles at a rather rapid pace, and I can stand for hours. Praise the Lord!

And it dawned on me that there is a spiritual lesson to be learned here. In a spiritual sense we are to “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). We are to “walk by faith” (2 Cor. 5:7). We are to “walk carefully” (Eph. 5:15). We are to “walk properly” (1 Thess. 4:12). And we are to “walk in the light” (1 John 1:7). And if we cease to do these things we lose the spiritual strength to do them! If we stop walking “in newness of life” we lose the strength to “walk in newness of life!” If we stop walking “by faith” we lose the strength to “walk by faith.” If we stop walking “carefully” we lose the strength to “walk carefully.” If we stop walking “properly” we lose the strength to “walk properly.” And if we stop walking “in the light” we lose the strength to “walk in the light.”

Doing all of the above is essential for our present and eternal salvation. So if you find yourself spiritually where I was physically, then you are going to have to do something to get your spiritual strength back so that you can begin your spiritual walking again. I did not get my physical strength back without much pain and effort, and your spiritual strength won't return without much effort and sacrifice on your part. But if you will do as Paul said in 1 Timothy 4:7 and “exercise yourself toward godliness” then you will regain your spiritual strength and rejoice in it.

- Cecil I. Jones

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# Pay Attention!

A man was killed on the local freeway yesterday. Police report that he first got his car entangled in the cable barrier in the median. He managed to get out safely, but he then walked into oncoming traffic - all the while talking on his cell phone!

This article is not about how distracting and dangerous cell phones are to drivers. It is about allowing ourselves to be distracted on the journey through life. Bad things happen when we are not paying attention, among them...

**Sin.** “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). Satan is subtle. He tried to catch us off guard. If we are not careful, sin is the result, with all its ugly consequences. 1 Corinthians 10:12 sounds a warning to overconfident brethren who think they can toy with temptation and not be affected: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.”

**Lost Opportunities.** “So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith” (Gal. 6:10). What if we are not looking for those opportunities? What if we are focused mostly on self? We will be goats in Jesus’ shepherd picture of judgment: “Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick,

or in prison, and did not take care of You?” (Matt. 25:44). The goats went to eternal punishment (v. 46).

**False Teaching.** Paul warned the Ephesian elders, “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert...” (Acts 20:29-31). Our shepherds must be watchful, yet each of us is responsible to avoid the wolves. John wrote, “For many deceivers have gone out into the world... Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward” (2 John 7-8).

**Lack of Readiness.** “Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming” (Matt. 24:42). May God help us all not to be distracted by the scenery or “fall asleep at the wheel” in His service.

- Frank Himmel

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## Total Commitment!

What does it mean to be totally committed to Jesus Christ?

1. It means serving even at a great disadvantage.
2. It means serving in spite of danger or real persecution.
3. It means serving in spite of the fact that His way is not the most popular.

4. It means serving in spite of relatives and friends who choose the opposite direction.
5. It means serving when others have fun in error.
6. It means serving when others are not fighting fair and using carnal enticements, such as recreation and entertainment.
7. It may mean worshipping with a small group in an unimpressive building.
8. It may mean worshipping with people who are not your age.
9. It may mean worshipping with people with whom you have little else in common, except Jesus Christ.

Self-denial has never been popular (Luke 9:23).

- Dick Blackford

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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"Are You Ready?"* (text: Luke 12:35-40); Sunday evening: *"The Anger of God!"* (text: Nahum 1:1-7).