

Living a Fruitful Life Getting Rooted by Assembling with the Saints

Intro: In our lessons on living a fruitful life, we've talked about the need to be fruitful, the keys to being fruitful. We've learned that if we want to live fruitful lives, we must tap into the provisions God has made to empower us. We must be firmly rooted in God's word in order for His fruit to be produced in us.

Last week we talked about the importance of the assembly for this purpose; and I suggested one of the reasons why we need to make the commitment to assemble with the saints—first in order to grow in our knowledge of God's word.

However there are many other important things that we do by assembling with fellow-Christians that enable us to live more fruitful lives. By assembling with the saints we...

Show our love and gratitude to God

Of course we can show our love for God and thank Him any time for His blessings; but God saw value in His people worshipping Him in community. There is something incredibly moving about people coming together to share their common faith and love for God in worship. We see this spiritual desire of declaring God's praise in the presence of others in the Scripture.

What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I shall lift up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I shall pay my vows to the Lord, Oh may it be in the presence of all His people. (Ps. 116:12-14)

The psalmist wanted to show others his gratitude for the blessings he had received. He would come to the place where God was worshipped and ask others to join with him in thanksgiving.

So should we! As we do this, we are already beginning to bear the fruit God seeks from us.

Give encouragement to our brethren

One of the stated purposes of our assemblies is to encourage our brethren:
...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near. (Heb. 10:24-25)

Every day we are out there in a world that does not appreciate our faith and values. It can erode our determination to do what is right. It is as Jesus warned, *"And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. (Mt. 24:12)* Sometimes people will say, "I just lost interest." Could it be because we've spent too much time with the lawless world and not enough time with God's obedient people? God's word offers a solution:
But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (Heb. 3:13)

This text is a strong argument for being present when the saints meet so that you can encourage them and be encouraged by them in living the Christian life.

Attending the services gives us the opportunity to know each other better, to understand and appreciate one another more.

To be aware of the problems and needs that others may have and how we may help them.

It is frustrating for those who want to encourage others to help those who don't attend regularly. If one calls them when absent, they may feel rebuked and get offended. If no one calls, they get upset that no one called. So what are we supposed to do!??

Sometimes we may think, "Well, no one really cares whether I attend or not." But I assure you that that is not true. People do care; and not attending is a sure way to demoralize those who do care and who attend the services. I've heard it in their comments and voices many times. "It's so discouraging to see how few people attend on Sunday nights and Wednesday night."

Work in cooperation with the church's leaders

No one believes that elders have a Scriptural right to legislate what you do with your personal life. We are not trying to create a "cult" that dictates what people do with their freedom. But elders do have the responsibility to take care of the flock. Paul described the work of elders this way:

(but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?); (1 Tim. 3:5)

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. (Acts 20:28)

A part of taking care of the flock to feed the flock. Could any leadership hope to feed God's people adequately with a single sermon once a week, equipping them to know all the word of God and protected against the various false doctrines of this world? Is it reasonable to expect that two elders can customize their teaching to nearly a hundred members and provide individualized plans of instruction? In seeking to do their job, the church's shepherds have to gather the flock for teaching; they seek to plan times to help the flock grow. But what happens if the sheep don't come to the table? We need you to come to be fed. The process can't work unless the sheep cooperate with the shepherds.

Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. (Hebrews 13:17)

Help our families build knowledge and faith

In the first lesson I spoke about the importance of growing in our personal knowledge; but God has entrusted us with teaching our families.

And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Eph. 6:4)

Of course, attending church is not a substitute for being a good parent; but the assemblies can help parents teach their children.

The churches of Christ have one of the most family-centered approaches to spiritual life of any group in the world. No group plans more serious Bible studies for young people than we do. No group will have any more dedicated group of teachers than we do. Yet often people do not take advantage of these opportunities.

And one should not conclude that bringing children to worship services where there is no Bible class has no value to them. It does. They may learn in those assemblies; and they may see the importance of your faith and your support of the effort. They are learning to sit still and pay attention to what is going on; they are learning by your dedicated example.

Conclusion: Here then are four more good reasons to get your roots down deep in the word of God by assembling with the saints. Your presence can make a difference to you, to your children, to others, and it matters to God.