

You're Tired and Don't Feel That Great, But...

By John R. Gibson

Who hasn't been in this situation? You're tired and don't feel your best, so you're thinking about missing the worship assembly. You may tell yourself that the Bible never said a church had to meet on Wednesday night, or perhaps it's a Sunday morning and you think that with a little rest you **might** be able to go that night. Whatever the gathering and whatever the reason, if you're not a health risk to others, please think about the following seven reasons to get up and go anyway.

God will be worshiped. Even on Wednesday evenings when our primary focus is on Bible study, we take time to praise and thank God in song and prayer. When tempted to stay home we need to stop and think seriously about the wonderful God who is worthy "to receive glory and honor and power" (Rev. 4:11) and is seeking true worshipers to give that kind of praise to Him (John 4:23).

On Sunday mornings **the Lord's great sacrifice will be remembered** (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). Among other things, the death of Christ is the focal point of God's plan of redemption, the means by which we can be forgiven, our hope of salvation, and the primary motivation for Christian living. It is no wonder that Paul described some as spiritually weak, sick, and even dead when the Lord's Supper was corrupted and not properly observed at Corinth (1 Cor. 11:27-30). Even if you don't feel your best physically or emotionally, you may do yourself even more harm by staying home.

The word of God will be taught. It's indisputable that some classes and sermons are not spellbinding—in fact, sometimes they are a little dry. When that is the case there will be occasions that it is the fault of those of us who are leading the study (and we who teach should work to improve in those areas), while other times it is simply the nature of the material (say Leviticus 15 versus Luke 15), but any time the inspired word of God is being studied and proclaimed good can be accomplished despite the failings of a teacher or the seemingly arid quality of the material. If we believe God's word has the power to save, is able to build us up, will not return to Him void, enables us to grow, makes us complete, provides enlightenment, etc., then we will do all we can not to miss out. (See Rom. 1:16; Isa. 55:10, 11; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Psalm 119:104, 105).

We have made a commitment. From the time the saving message of forgiveness in Christ began to be proclaimed in Acts 2, the saved worshiped together in a committed relationship to God and one another (Acts 2:41-47). When Paul returned to Jerusalem after his conversion he sought to be joined to the disciples (Acts 9:26), and when he went throughout the world preaching the good news he established churches in the various cities (Acts 14:21-23). When he wrote to one such church he spoke of how each member had an important role to play. He warned some about thinking too much of themselves, but urged others to realize they were not unnecessary or unimportant to the development of the body (1 Cor. 12:12-27). If you ever find yourself debating on going or staying, remember that God never assigned anyone the role of absent member. When you join the disciples you make a commitment that is not to be taken lightly.

Others will be encouraged by our presence. Having spoken of the incredible privilege we have of approaching God's throne with confidence, the writer urged his readers to consider others and the power we have to stir them up for good works and provide necessary exhortation through our assembling together (Heb. 10:19-25). We must appreciate that our periods of collective worship and study are about both worship of God and edification of our spiritual family (Col. 3:16). When you're tired and not feeling your best, please think about the one who spent

hours preparing for the class or sermon; think about the ones who are going through a tough time for various reasons; consider the needs of some who may face nothing but discouragement at home and at work. Think about others and see if you can't make that little extra effort to come on and "exhort one another."

As implied by the previous point, **others will be discouraged by your absence.** We are in a war with Satan in which it is difficult at times to stand against the forces of darkness (Eph. 6:10-18), and the level of difficulty is only increased when our fellow-soldiers are not standing beside us. Jesus gave a stern warning in Matt. 18: 6, 7 about causing others to sin. "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!" Before you make the decision to be absent please think seriously about the message your empty seat sends.

Along the lines of the last two points, **it is an opportunity to let your light shine.** Religion that simply seeks to impress others is reprehensible and to be avoided (Matt. 6:1-6, 16-18), but in the same sermon in which He condemned religion done for show, Jesus exhorted His disciples to let their lights shine. "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16). When others, especially your children, see you put first things first, overcome your weariness, and push yourself to worship, study, and edify others, they will be learning an important lesson about priorities and commitment (Matt. 6:33). On the other hand, when others see the things that keep us from assembling with our brethren never prevent us from going to work, to ball games, etc., they are learning what really matters in our lives.

Certainly there will be times we cannot be present, but if we think on these seven points we might find those occasions to be far more occasional than common. The next time you are tired, not at your best, and thinking about staying home, please consider these seven reasons to push yourself a little harder.

Scripture quotations from the New King James Version, copyright 1995, Thomas Nelson Publishing, Inc.