

Drooping Hands And Weak Knees

The Hebrews writer said, "Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed," Hebrews 12:12,13. Gatherings among church people on different occasions are always going to vary. Every time the church meets the group that gathers is always different. For certain most everyone will be there who are usually there, but what makes the difference are the visitors and the stragglers. In a large congregation the chances of the same group being at any two assemblies are nearly impossible.

Reasons for the differences in the numbers are varied. With visitors, folks attend for many reasons. Some are looking for a new church family, but many are traveling through the area and stop in to worship.

What about the stragglers? No, they are not the ones who sometime have to work. They are not even the ones who are on vacation or out of town occasionally. Perhaps the "stragglers" would be better called "strugglers." They are the ones who hold back from embellishing their lives with the Christian community around them. They may be there for a week or two, and then you might not see them for weeks. And for some the last time they attended, was just that- the last time they attended-anywhere.

What causes some people to hold back from really giving themselves to the work of God? Perhaps the reasons are many, but some should be addressed. Some things that might be considered are the cares of this world. The world in which we live has such a stronghold on the lives of individuals. Events that are innocent in and of themselves like school and recreational activities can be time consuming and draining on potential spiritual awareness. Family time at the end of a hard work day often takes precedence over assembling with other Christians on any given mid-week Bible Study at the church building.

Though some may have the greatest intentions even when missing the assemblies to do other "important" things there are a number of results that are unavoidable. Disconnection and complacency often results. Church attendance becomes less and less important being superseded by other things. Faith wanes. Children are affected. They grow up thinking that other things are more important than worship-which translates to other things being more important than a personal relationship with God, Hebrews 10:25. But more than anything else discouragement with the potential of full apostasy can frequently be the result.

God gave humanity the church for many reasons. In addition to it being the place where sins are forgiven, it is also meant to be the place where people can thrive both spiritually and emotionally. Focus on God helps keep focus off ourselves. Some people are firm believers in keeping their body fit. They will endure hours of hard exercise to keep fit, yet will suffer emotionally and spiritually by finding other things to do that keep them

from connecting with their Christian family. Then they wonder why they are discouraged and things in their lives do not go the way they should.

An appeal to attend worship assemblies faithfully is only part of God's overall plan for a balanced spiritual diet. In addition to regular Bible study and prayer, God wants Christians to be strong by connecting to their spiritual family, the church. Surrounding yourself and your schedule with church activities and friends will help to increase emotional and spiritual stability. The result is that everyone in the family benefits. Struggling marriages are helped. Children become better adjusted and seasoned with good influence. And, most of all the family is more vibrant and strong. The reason is that focus is removed from self and replaced with proper focus on God.

Are you in a spiritual slump right now? Are your hands drooping and knees weak under the heavy burden of discouragement? Get involved with the work of the Lord. Do not wait to be asked to help. Look for a work that needs doing and start helping. In so doing, the Hebrew writer reminds us that healing will be the result.

-Scott