

We are in this time of not being able to “come together” (1 Corinthians 11:17, 20) or “assemble ourselves together” (Hebrews 10:25) in response to Covid-19. The more restrictive this time becomes and the longer it lasts, the more I would like us to think in terms of essential vs. non-essential; what can be replaced and to what extent, and what cannot be replaced.

Absence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder – A Renewed Appreciation for the Life of the Body

1. Christ has instructed/commanded the local church to assemble together.

a. The church in a locality gathered/assembled together.
Examples: 1 Corinthians 5:4; 11:17, 20, 14:23;

b. We are commanded not to forsake that assembly.
Hebrews 10:24,25

*In our Covid-19 response we are **NOT** forsaking – We are being providentially hindered from assembling together for a time.*

c. The assembly was more than the “parts” put together in proximity to each other.

- The church assembled to function as a body. There was a life to it.
- The church body exists apart from the assembly, functions to an extent outside the assembly, but **Christ has designed it and instructed it to function as an assembled body.**

2. Not being able to assemble prevents us from functioning to the full extent of what Christ desires.

- Some functions of the assembled body cannot be replaced or substituted.
- Some functions of the assembled body can be replaced, but only to some extent.
- Any substitution misses something.

Online/Media “churches” can provide an experience – but can never replace what Christ intends for the local church.

We can “stream” or “record” services to minister to those unable to assemble, but those are never meant to replace assembling together or excuse forsaking the assembly.

In the New Testament we find these elements of the local church assembly. We can do some of them while “dis-assembled”, but we will always miss something of what Christ desires and designed.

Preaching/Teaching of the Word	Reading the Word
Prayer/Praying	The Lord’s Supper
Giving	Singing
One-Anothers	

The thing that cannot be replaced in the local church is gathering together.

Let’s increasing look forward to that happening again.