

## “WHENEVER YOU COME TOGETHER”

### INTRODUCTION

When we lived in a condo for 12½ years where there was no fireplace, we got a \$5 Yule Log DVD to simulate the ambiance of a crackling fire during the winter. We are very thankful now to have a real wood-burning stove in the house we recently moved into. There is a noticeable difference between a video of a flickering fire on a cold screen versus the aroma and warmth of an actual fire.

#### A. **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:26**

Paul, in correcting some misbehavior in the assemblies of the church at Corinth taught they were to “*come together*” for the purpose of “*edification.*” Sadly, the development of technology combined with a recent panic over a certain virus has resulted in many believers neglecting to “*come together*” while they attempt to be edified from their couch, breakfast table, or even bed. The fact is, though, that they aren’t receiving the warmth of the real thing, but just watching a cold screen.

#### B. **Hebrews 10:23-25**

1. “*Forsaking the assembling of ourselves together*” was already a problem in the first century when this was written. Technology has only exacerbated an existing problem.
2. By not assembling, Christians are inconsiderate of each other, and they are wavering in their hope.
3. The advantage of assembling is stirring each other up. Paint that isn’t stirred is of no use whatsoever and Christians that don’t get stirred up also stop being useful.

### I. COMING TOGETHER AFFECTS OUR GREETINGS

#### A. **Romans 16:16; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:14**

Paul and Peter both taught disciples to greet one another. Kissing is probably incidental as what matters is whether the gesture is “*holy*” and motivated “*of love*.” Regardless, some physical contact is expected.

**B. Galatians 2:9**

One authorized form of greeting is the “*right hand of fellowship*” – a handshake by which we imply approval and participation.

**C. Acts 20:1**

Embracing is also appropriate. Whether we kiss, hug, or shake hands, it is truly important that we have bodily contact when we greet each other. Some of our members might be living alone, bereft of a spouse, children grown up and moved out. It would be a shame if the only time someone touched them it was the barber or dentist. Rather, let it be the loving contact of a fellow Christian who warms their hands and their heart.

**II. COMING TOGETHER AFFECTS OUR COMFORT**

**A. 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:11**

We are responsible to comfort each other.

**B. Romans 12:15**

While a cold screen may not prevent us from sharing our tears, doing so in person with each other makes an enormous difference.

**C. Acts 20:37**

Being physically able to fall on each other’s necks matters.

**III. COMING TOGETHER AFFECTS OUR MUSIC**

**A. James 5:13**

It is not only possible, but very good to sing on our own.

**B. Ephesians 5:19**

It is also necessary, though, to sing to “one another” and that cannot be accomplished while watching worship online. Even if the one sitting at home sings along with the congregation, the congregation isn’t hearing it.

**C. Colossians 3:16**

When we sing collectively, we teach and we admonish one another. Someone watching a screen might get admonished, but cannot admonish others.

**IV. COMING TOGETHER AFFECTS OUR PRAYERS**

**A. Matthew 6:5-6**

Again, this is a worshipful act which can and, indeed, must be done in solitude.

**B. Acts 12:5, 12**

Yet, it can also, and very much ought to, be done congregationally. The church prays and gathering together for prayer is an appropriate undertaking.

**C. James 5:16**

When a fellow saint confesses sin to the congregation, weeping and kneeling in humility, we pray together over that one. Watching from afar just isn’t the same.

**V. COMING TOGETHER AFFECTS THE LORD’S SUPPER**

**A. Acts 20:7**

Breaking bread in memory of Jesus’ body is the very reason we gather on the first of the week. As assuredly as this passage teaches communion on Sunday, it teaches assembling for the same.

**B. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:17-33**

Four times in this Scripture, we are taught that we must “*come together.*” It must be “*in one place.*”