

A SPIRITUAL BAROMETER

By Roelf L. Ruffner

“Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24,25),

A barometer is a meteorological instrument which is used to measure air pressure and forecast the weather. As Christians, we cannot judge (to pronounce judgment on) the heart or motivation of another. Only God can do that. *“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measure to you again”*(Matt.7:1,2). Some have misunderstood this verse and when rebuked because of sin, they proclaim, “You are judging me!”. In essence they are “judging” you or claiming to know your heart by accusing you of judging. But they forget another commandment of the Lord: *“Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment”* (John 7:24).

But how do I judge (discern) another Christian **righteously**? The late brother Marshall Keeble used to say that we must be spiritual “fruit inspectors”. In other words, we can observe another’s action (or lack of action) and perceive the fruit that they are bearing. Our standard for judgment must be the word of God (John 12:48).

The **Holy Spirit** gives the Christian a clear command concerning attendance when He says, *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...”* (Heb.10:25). The assembling of Jesus’ brethren together from out of the world is a special event. Whether it is

gathering around the Lord’s table to remember the Lord’s death on a Sunday (Acts 20:7) or a Bible study on Wednesday evening; it is a time of love and encouragement for the Christian. It tells us that we are not alone in this world – *“for we be brethren”* (Gen.13:8). It tells God and the world that we are putting the church (the kingdom of God) **first** in our lives (Matt.6:33).

This why absence from the assembly can be considered a measure of spiritual problems, though it is certainly not the only measure. I am not talking about the occasional absence caused by illness or circumstances out of our control. Rather, I am referring to a **pattern** of non-attendance. We have all heard very flimsy excuses for forsaking the assembly - recreational, social, and entertainment. Brethren, if my excuses look flimsy to my brethren how do you think they seem to the Lord? *“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”* (Luke 6:46).

For me attendance comes down to a matter of commitment and love. Am I committed to striving to obey my Lord and Master in all things? Many of us are committed to getting to work on time, every work day. But where is that commitment, that resolution, in the matter of attendance?

It is also a matter of **love** – love of our brethren and love of God. When we are absent our brethren miss us. They miss the encouragement and love that our very presence can exhibit (Heb.10:24). Attendance also involves our love of God because we are doing what He commands us (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3).

Brethren, let us examine the spiritual fruit we are bearing in our lives. Does the spiritual barometer point to a storm in our lives or peace with God?