

A Biblical Philosophy of Church Attendance (Part Two)

(Review)

I. The structure of Hebrews 10.19-25

The Foundation (19-21)

- Confidence because of the blood of Christ (“since” 19-20)
- Confidence because of the Priesthood of Christ (“since” 21)

The Exhortations (22-25)

- Let us draw near (to Christ) (22)
- Let us hold fast the confession (of Christ) (23)
- Let us consider how to stimulate one another (for Christ) (24-25)

These exhortations could find expressions as imperatives, commands, (“You there! Draw near! Hold fast! Consider!”) but instead the writer of Hebrews exhorts, saying, “Join with me in drawing near, holding fast, considering how...” There is imperatival force in his language, but he chooses a more inclusive tone, urging his readers forward in their faith. Lest I diminish the *urge*, let me add that this exhortation can rise very close to the force of a regular imperative.¹

II. The Meaning of Verse 25

- Third Exhortation:
 - Let us consider how to stimulate one another (for Christ) (24-25)
- Verse 25:
 - Not forsaking:
 - But encouraging (parakaleo):

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Adverbial participles of *means* (answer the question of “**how**”?)

¹ Pastor Don, [Putting Hebrews 10 into Perspective - an Oxgoad, eh? \(substack.com\)](https://www.substack.com/p/putting-hebrews-10-into-perspective)

A. In other words

- How do we stimulate one another to love and good works?
 - By not forsaking the assembly
(negative “how”)
 - By encouraging one another
(positive “how”)

B. If “Not forsaking the assembly” was a command:

- Would you be in **sin** if you didn’t show up at a church meeting...
 - Because you stayed home with a sick child?
 - Because you were at work and couldn’t get someone to take your shift?
 - Because you were in a war zone and it wasn’t safe to travel to church? (Cade’s Cove illustration)
 - Because you lived a long way from church and couldn’t make it on a Wednesday night because the service would be over by the time you got there?
- If it is a command, it isn’t **absolute** — some circumstances prevent attendance but you aren’t **guilty** of *disobedience*

III. What Is the Command?

- To consider one another “to stimulate unto love and good works”
- The focus is oriented towards other people — to ministry
- Church attendance must reflect an “others” oriented viewpoint
 - You shouldn’t attend in order to **get something out of it**
 - You should attend in order to **give something to others**

IV. The Others Orientation of Church life

- Consider the positive means to stimulate one another:
“encouraging *one another*”
 - Parakaleo: to come alongside
 - We get Paraclete from this word, the Holy Spirit is our Paraclete (Comforter, Helper, Advocate)
 - The opposite of Not Forsaking is Coming Alongside one another
- Church life and attendance is about giving to others not getting for yourself (**paradox**, when you give, you will get...)