

Promptness not Lateness to the Assembly and Life Activities– Asaolu O. S. (asaolu@yahoo.com)

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Text - Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

The New Testament is really not silent on anything that pertains to life and godliness. It contains instructions, examples and implicit principles applicable to any and every situation. The passages cited below show that lateness to the assembly should be avoided and timely service and personal punctuality pursued.

Proverbs 6:6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:

Proverbs 6:9 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

Proverbs 18:9 He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.

Proverbs 19:24 A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

Proverbs 20:4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

Proverbs 22:13 The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.

The church meets continually for several reasons including edification

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 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.

1 Corinthians 14:23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place,

For discipline and meetings (Acts 15)

1 Corinthians 5:4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

For Lord's Supper

Acts 20:7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

1 Corinthians 11:33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

For Giving

1 Corinthians 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

For Singing Praises/Worship

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Hebrews 13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

John 9:4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

John 13:27 ...Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

Ephesians 5:16-17 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

Romans 12:11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord

Acts 20:16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

1 Corinthians 14:23,26 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place... How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue... Let all things be done unto edifying.

Acts 5: 5-7 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

Matthew 25:1-13 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.
...And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Conclusion: When Jesus said, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt.6:33), obviously He wasn’t specifically addressing the problem of habitual tardiness to bible class and/or worship services. Nevertheless it points out that the things of God should be given priority. One should not be habitually late or absent to appointments, we should all be concerned about being on time. Everyone has been late to something at some point, often due to unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances. As with all things, God looks at the heart, “for the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

Punctuality shows respect for others and to God, it avoids causing distractions, making recaps or assumptions and excuses. Everyone is able to focus on his or her duty without ad-hoc arrangements to fill in for the late or absent individual.

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 2:3-5)

It is a way of encouraging our superiors, and of motivating our peers and subordinates.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.