



For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth... in every place. (1 Thessalonians 1:8)

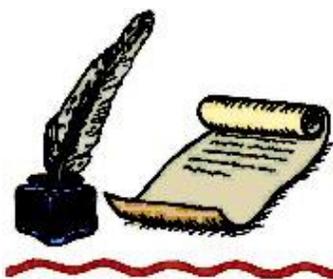
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From the Shepherd's Pen: Oneness

I had thought to write about our love for God and the central role it plays in our Christian lives. But current



circumstances have led me to write about oneness; the oneness spoken of by Paul in 1 Cor. 12 and Rom. 12. There he likens the church to a body. This illustrates to us the unity, interdependence, and mutual concern to be present among members of the church. Because we are so scattered, this can be very difficult even in normal times. Today, we are even more isolated from each other. Some have been able to maintain some level of closeness through internet, phone, and cards. More recently, several of us have been meeting at the building. Even this is not fully satisfying. "Who is that masked man I'm shouting at from six feet away"? It is important that you not be separated from the body. We know what happens to a part of our body that is separated for very long. Don't let that happen to you. Reach out to others! Watch on internet if you can! Attend whenever possible! We want, I want you to live!

Jimmie Hattemer

After reading the above, I thought an illustration that I read years ago would be appropriate. I'll have to give it by memory, though. Also, the point I want to make is not about missing worship. Many choose to be absent or stream it due to our circumstances. However, there is a great point about losing complete contact with brothers and sisters.

A brother visited a fellow member who had been very regular in attendance but had discontinued the practice and was absent for some time. The man was home alone sitting by the fireplace on a chilly evening. The man welcomed his visitor and had a good idea why he was there. He motioned to him to sit in a chair near the fireplace. The two sat in silence for a few minutes. Finally, the visitor used some tongs by the fire place to remove a burning ember, placing it at the side of the hearth. As the two watched in silence, the ember began to dull, losing its glow as it cooled. Finally, when the ember was cold and grey, the visitor picked up the cold, charcoaled ember with his hands and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Once again the ember began to glow from being in the hot fire. The visitor finally spoke and pointed out the difference in the ember cold on the hearth and glowing in the midst of the fire. He then got up to depart. As he got to the door, the member said, "Thanks for your visit. I will be back in worship Sunday."

The point is this. We need one another in the church, as Jim indicated. When we are isolated from one another, we could very well grow cold and lose our zeal. Whether or not you are able to attend the assembly for Bible classes, keep in touch.

Terry Mabery