

From Where I Sit . . .

"A DYING MEMBER"

Don't let the title throw you, but do let it get your attention. We're not reporting on a physical death in this congregation, but it is possible that someone might see a similarity in what we're about to tell.

The story is told of a certain elder who was greatly distressed over a member of the congregation who had quit attending the services. The absent member was sorely missed, and the elder went straight to his house where he found him sitting before the open fireplace. The absentee, somewhat startled by the intrusion, hastily placed another chair for his visitor, and then braced himself for the expected rebuke.

Not a word did the elder say. Taking a seat before the open fireplace, he took the tongs and lifted a glowing coal from the midst of its fellows. He then laid it down by itself on the hearth.

Remaining painfully silent, he watched the blaze die out. Then the absentee brother broke the silence, "You need not say a word, preacher. I'll be at the next service where I belong."

I wish it was always that simple, but not everyone gets the point. We do need to be near the other members who are generating spiritual encouragement and edification to help keep our flames burning. God never intended that Christianity be a "Go it alone" approach. "I need the church and the church needs me" is a fair thing for each one of us to say.

If any of our readers are struggling with whether to come to services or not, please think for a few minutes about the good that is done by your presence, and the harm that results from your wilful absence. On the one hand, God is glorified that we chose Him over the world. God is praised by your worship in the spirit of holiness. Your Christian family is uplifted by your expression of faith, and by your joint participation with them in serving the Lord.

Whether we want to be or not, we are involved in other people's lives. We cannot live in a neutral zone where we wield no influence either for the good or the bad. We are responsible to others and will lead them either negatively or positively.

The Biblical perspective is: *"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. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins..."* (Heb 10:25) *"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."* (Col 3:16).

I hope each of us will consider very carefully the will of the Lord and choose to be in all the services of the church. See you this Lord's Day!

. . . . Terry Broome

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