

## All Alone

There is a television reality show called “Alone”. In this series, 10 individuals, who are considered contestants, are dropped into a wilderness area on approximately 5 acres and separated from each other with only 10 survival items, chosen from a list provided by the producer of the show. They must stay on their assigned 5 acres and have no contact with any other human. They are to film their own experiences with cameras provided by the producer of the show. The object is to see who can survive all alone the longest, living off the resources on their 5 acres. The individuals face many challenges including building a livable structure, starting fires when needed, and catching or collecting their own food. They have a radio in order to contact the show's recovery team when they can no longer survive alone. Once they “tap out”, they are no longer a contestant. Some have tapped out after a few days, some after a few weeks, and some after several months. The last person to survive all alone is the winner. The record for someone to survive alone is about 75 days and almost without exception, the contestants quit because they long for human contact, family & friends.

As Christians, we know that God's plan was for man to not be alone as found in Genesis 2:18 where God states, “It is not good for the man to be alone”. God was also instrumental in setting down specifics for the children of Israel to follow with instructions concerning gathering together at the tabernacle, and later on, the synagogue. Today, it is the church. Now, we know that the church body is made up of those who profess, and live their life with Jesus as their Lord and Savior, but we also have a “tabernacle”, a “synagogue”, a church location at which to gather.

So many times we hear people say, or may have thought it ourselves, “Do I really need to go to church? Can't I have my own relationship with God without the need to attend church?” Isn't the real question “What do you want or what does God want”? To help answer these questions, we turn to scripture for guidance. To please God, we must meet together as one body according to *Hebrews 10:24*, where it says, “*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching*”. Amazingly, when we take a closer look at this verse, we see that it is our responsibility to meet together, to spur one another on, to encourage one another. The phrase, “meeting together”, used in this verse, is translated from the Greek word ἐπισυναγωγὴν (phonetically pronounced episynagōgēn. You will recognize the English word “synagogue”. God was very specific with His expectations. He wanted his children to meet and it was at the synagogue or some other gathering place. It has not changed for us today.

We are living in unusual times with unprecedented circumstances. In some cases, it appears that there are forces trying to prevent us from meeting together. In the midst of this, we must not forget the obvious for the Christian - God did not intend for us to be all alone and He expects that we will join together in fellowship as His church and At His church or some other gathering place.

While the Hebrews 10 reference does not appear to be a command, we must interpret scripture with scripture. The command to worship comes from Exodus 20:8 *“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy”*. Keeping in mind that there are a multitude of scripture verses that support meeting together and also on how to worship and fellowship, the conclusion is, we must find a way to meet in order to “spur one another on with love and good deeds”, even in the midst of insurmountable circumstances.

In Hebrews 2:12. It says, *“I (Jesus) will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises.”* Wherever Jesus traveled, He was present in the synagogue on the Sabbath joining together with the congregation singing praises. Is it our desire to do the same? We are not called to be all alone.

There is a man who is about 50 years old and lives in Davis. He was born with cerebral palsy, is confined to a wheelchair, and has only known this way of suffering his entire life. He longs for the day the Lord will reward his faithfulness with a new body. Faithfulness - this man has faithfully, for over 30 years, traveled 4 miles one way from his home to church and back...in his wheel chair. In the cold of winter, in the rain, in the heat of summer. His love for the Lord and his devotion to the body of Christ is his driving force. Nothing can stop the Lord from doing His work. This man is an unwavering witness to all who know him.

This message is not intended for those who are restricted from attending worship due to Covid 19, but it is intended to encourage us all to be faithful, as God directs.

Submitted by the Bethany Elders