My Responsibility To The Local Church

Shortly after obeying the Gospel in Acts 9:18, Saul (who becomes the Apostle Paul), sought out to join himself with the church meeting in Jerusalem. Luke records, "And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples... so he was with them at Jerusalem" (Acts 9:26-28). Saul, as a babe in Christ, recognized the necessity of becoming an active member of a local collective of Christians. "He spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus..." (Acts 9:29). Saul, who was not yet the Apostle Paul, recognized that he needed to actively assemble with the local saints as part of his duty to God (Hebrews 10:24-25). Do we realize and take our duty to assemble with the saints as seriously as Saul, who became the Apostle Paul, did?

Unfortunately, today, some do not see the assembly of the saints to be as important as Saul did. In Saul we see where each of us as a Christian once stood. Saul was faithful to the Law of Moses, yet he was a practicing sinner. Once he obeyed the Gospel, Saul wasted no time in standing up to the enormous obstacles that stood before him, including the possibility of physical death. Saul did not seek out the local church at Jerusalem based upon who the preacher was, or how comfortable their meeting place was, nor for what outside of the worship activities they had to offer. He simply seeks to join with them (please read the entire context) because he knows he must worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24) on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). In Saul you see an active participant in the local church.

Upon becoming the Apostle Paul, he encourages Christians to fulfill their duty to God and each other through their membership in the local church. To the church at Ephesus he writes, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk

worthy of the calling in which you were called" (Ephesians 4:1). Part of that walking worthy is assembling with the local saints to fulfill our duty to worship God. You, I cannot fulfill what God expects and deserves in worship unless assembled with the saints. On the first day of the week we should desire (even though commanded) to sing praise unto God (Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16), pray collectively (James 5:16), give as God has prospered us (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), learn from God's word (Hebrews 10:24-25), and most importantly, remember our Savior's death upon the cross (Acts 20:7).

In addition, your, my duty to the local church does not stop with the required assembling on the first day of the week. When Paul addressed the church in Philippi, he instructed the Christians in that local church to "look out for the needs of others" (Philippians 2:1-11). Your, my, duty to the local church does not end at the door once the assembly has dismissed. We need to exhort one another, encourage one another, while it is still called today (Hebrews 3:13). We also need to share the Truth (Mark 16:15-16).

The local church will only prosper if each one of us sees our duty to the local church to be as important as Saul (Paul) did.