

*"John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not." John 1:26*



How often have you gone to church with thoughts of doing this thing or talking to someone about that thing? The thought of meeting with your Lord never crosses your mind yet, we call it the "Lord's House," and we go on the "Lord's Day." We walk through the door with our minds still cluttered with a cacophony of bits and pieces of our week or the morning's hurried pace. We are instructed to *"Be still! And know that I am God."* Are we "still" when we go to church or are we "busy?" We assemble to honor the One we ignore for the better part of the time we spend together. We are more interested in how so and so is doing or what has happened during the week. These are not bad things, but they should not be the primary reason we come together. I'm afraid that, more often than not, this is the case. *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* Do we gather in the name of Jesus? If so, He is there, albeit ignored by most. If we truly gathered in His name, He would be the entire focus of attention. Sports, business, weather, illness, current events, schedules, and circumstances would all be forgotten and discarded in favor of and in deference to the Savior and His Word. Sometimes, I wonder if Jesus is ever invited to meet with us at all. Oh, we make a great show of honoring Him with our lips, but our hearts are far from Him. The altar call is the best indicator of whether Christ is in the midst or not. His righteous presence would truly reveal our shortcomings and force us to our knees every time we meet. There would be no need for the Pastor to plead for folks to come to the altar and get things settled. It would happen spontaneously as the Holy Spirit moved and convicted hearts. *"Quench not the Spirit"* is a command that upon which we often put a personal focus, but we never consider that it is when we assemble that we are the guiltiest. The Tempter's voice is often more prevalent at altar call than the Spirit's, because for the most part, we don't check the world's "baggage" at the church door. We bring all the pride, stress, and chaos of our daily lives right into the assembly. Yes, bring your cares to Jesus, but do it by making Him the focus of attention and forgetting all else. Lift up Jesus and His Word! Feast your soul around the Bountiful Savior and His blessings and promises. He will erase all care and sorrow from your furrowed brow while you sit and bask in the glow of His presence.

Just a glimpse of glory bright,  
As we gather in His Light,  
Reminds us of our future fate,  
On other side of Heaven's gate. -CGP

Do we dare leave our troubles at the door? Dare we devote our time to the Way, the Truth, and the Life? The assembly that meets with Christ will experience a taste eternal ecstasy and a glimpse of Glory.

*"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God... For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Romans 8:16, 18*