PLEASE COME HOME

Many people who will read this have quit going to church or else are not faithful. It is possible that they were once faithful and active members but for one reason or another they have ceased to attend or else become irregular. They no longer serve the Lord or support the church in an active way.

Perhaps you yourself are one of this number. If so, you probably tell yourself that eventually you will get started back to church—that someday you will renew your commitment to worship and serve the Lord actively...But, meanwhile, you remain away from the church and out of touch with God for the most part.

To all in this condition we send a plea from the heart: "Please come home. Come back to God, to a Savior who loves you, to brothers and sisters in Christ who miss you and care deeply for you!" You need to come back for the following reasons:

**(1) YOUR CONDITION IS A MATTER 0F GRAVE CONCERN TO GOD**. Jesus pictured a shepherd whose concern for a sheep away from the fold caused him to leave 99 sheep in the fold and go out and painstakingly search for the *one* who was missing **(Luke 15:4)**. This is a picture of God's concern for those who are away from Him!

**(2) YOU ARE DEPRIVING YOURSELF OF SPIRITUAL HEALTH**. The failure to worship and serve God results in the shriveling of the soul! Your spiritual nature cannot survive if you do not feed it. Your absence from church diminishes and weakens you.

**(3) YOUR TALENTS AND ABILITIES ARE BEING WASTED**. Jesus taught that we have all been given the opportunity and ability to serve God in some way **(Matthew 25:14-15).** So much more good could be done in the world if all would use their talents as God desires. When you fail to do your part as a member of God’s work force, then the cause of Christ suffers. You are needed!

**(4) YOU ARE LETTING YOUR INFLUENCE WORK AGAINST GOD, THE TRUTH, AND THE CHURCH.** Although you do not intend it so, your example says to all who observe your life that the church is not important and that God may be safely ignored. It is especially tragic that those who read this message in your example are often your own children and grandchildren.

**(5) OTHERS NEED YOU AND YOU NEED THEM.** We need the mutual encouragement of one another in living the Christian life. By your absence from church you deprive others of the encouragement you could give them, and you deprive yourself of the strength which they could share with you.

**(6) YOUR SEPARATION FROM GOD MAY BECOME A PERMANENT ONE.** Life is uncertain. We have no guarantee of what the future holds. Though you intend to come back to the Lord, you may wait too long or life may end too soon. The emphasis of the Bible is always upon NOW (II Corinthians 6:2). The future is too uncertain to risk your soul on it.

**(Submitted by D. Ellis Walker)**