

Thank you, Mike Perkins...
...for being our speaker for today!

October Birthdays

5 Flor Diaz
9 Esmeralda McCollum
16 Elizabeth Carrillo
27 Paulo Prado
28 Allan Brown

October Anniversaries

8 Elizabeth Carrillo and Al Diaz

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."
Acts 2:42

Church of Christ

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Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Website:
indiochurchofchrist.com

Indio Informer

Vol. 37 No. 42
October 18, 2026

"Commit your works to the Lord, And your plans will be established."

Proverbs 16:3

- *"Fight the good fight"*
- *"Keep the faith"*
- *"Finish the course"*

"CHURCH" ASSEMBLIES

By Lanny Smith

Any good Bible student knows that God has commanded the saints of a local church to assemble (cf. Hb.10:24-25). However, many have read things into this passage that simply are not there. Notice some things that Hebrews 10:25 does NOT tell us. It does not tell us everything which is to be done when the church assembles. It does not tell us how many must assemble at one place or time, nor does it tell us when or where to assemble. Hence, we must look to other passages for such information. Let us examine what the Bible says about "church" assemblies.

Who must assemble? First, we must realize that when a local church assembles, it is individual saints who "come together." A local church is made up of individual saints; and it exists even when not assembled. For instance, the church at Jerusalem existed even when it was "*scattered*" by persecution, and when these saints were in their homes (Ac.8:1-3). The church at Antioch existed even before it assembled (Ac.14:27 - Note: if they "*gathered the church together*," then "*the church*" existed before it was "*gathered*"). This is important because some seem to think that the church only exists when it is assembled. This idea is

obviously false. The “*church*” is simply the “people” – whether assembled or not!

Why do we assemble? While the saints of a local church must assemble on a regular basis, one searches in vain to find a “specific arrangement” for such assemblies. They assembled to pray (Ac.12:12), to sing (Col.3:16), to teach (Ac.11:26), to eat the Lord’s Supper (Ac.20:7), and to give (1Cor.16:2). But they also assembled for other purposes, such as appointing servants (Ac.6:1-4), hearing reports from preachers (Ac.14:27), writing letters (Ac.15:22-29), reading letters (Ac.15:30-31), etc. But notice carefully that no passage demands each of these activities in a single assembling. In other words, a church could gather simply to pray, or simply to teach, or simply to sing, etc.

How many should assemble in one place? They assembled with the whole church in one place (1Cor.14:23), and in smaller assemblies (Ac.12:5, 12, 17; 20:17). Further, the Corinthians were said to be “in church” (i.e., “in assembly”) even before all had arrived (1Cor.11:18, 20-21, 33). Hence, no one has the right to demand that only “*the whole church*” may “*come together in one place.*” Some brethren believe that acceptable worship can only occur in an assembly of “the whole church.” This is why they speak of the “sin” of “dividing the assembly”. It never seems to occur to them that there can be assemblies smaller than the whole – NOT a “divided assembly,” but simply “assemblies,” each made up of less than all local saints. In this light, consider also: Ac.18:26; 21:17-25; Ga.2:1-2; 2Tm.2:2; and Tit.2:3-5.

When should we assemble? The Scriptures indicate that saints may meet “*daily*” if they so choose (Ac.2:46; 5:42). However, two activities are restricted to a specific day. Local saints must assemble to eat the Lord’s Supper, and to give of their means to support the local church “*on the first day of the week*” only (Ac.20:7; 1Cor.16:2).

Where should we assemble? The Scriptures do not bind any “place” of assembly. Early saints assembled in the temple, in homes, in upper rooms, in public and private places, etc. (Ac.5:42; 12:12; 20:7-8, 20). Further, Jesus clearly indicated that there was no specific “place” for worship (Jn.4:20-24). And Paul confirms that saints may assemble “everywhere” (1Tm.2:8ff). This gives a local church the liberty to borrow, rent, buy, or build assembling places. Most churches consider it expedient (helpful) to build “church buildings” for this purpose. In those buildings, some churches simply have an auditorium in which the whole church may assemble; but other churches also have classrooms for assemblies smaller than the whole, such as Bible classes. Such decisions about meeting places are matters of judgment that each church should be free to make without interference from others (1Pt.5:2).

Can we assemble for the wrong reasons? It must also be recognized that the saints of a local church have organized themselves for specific and limited works (cf. 1Tm.5:16). Hence, a local church “as such” may only arrange assemblies for its peculiar work. Examples of such assemblies have been cited above. When the saints of a local church assemble for works not assigned by God, they show that they “despise the church of God” – they’ve perverted their God-given purpose for assembling (cf. 1Cor.11:20-22, and context). Hopefully, this article will help us understand more about the “*assemblies*” of a local church.

“...and let’s consider how to encourage one another in love and good deeds, not abandoning our own meeting together, as is the habit of some people, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

Hebrews 10:24–25