

## HOW FAR IS IT TO CHURCH?

Texts: Acts 8:27; Matt. 3:13; 1 Kings 12:28

INTRO: We use the word church in its most literal sense--the assembly of the saints. The Ethiopian traveled over 1,000 miles "to church." Jesus, according to most scholars, traveled some 60 miles on foot to be baptized in the Jordan River.

Many today are lax in assembling with the saints. Sometimes the excuse is, "It is too far." It is inconvenient. How far is it to church?

### I. IT DEPENDS ON YOUR LOVE FOR THE CHURCH OR KINGDOM OF GOD.

- A. This relationship cost God His Son, John 3:16.
- B. It cost Christ His life, Romans 5:8; Acts 20:28.
- C. We must seek His kingdom first, Matt. 6:33.
- D. If we value this relationship as the Lord did, it is not too far

### II. IT DEPENDS ON YOUR REALIZATION OF THE NEED.

- A. The rich man of Luke 12 did not realize his need for spiritual things. If it had been across the street, it would probably have been too far.
- B. The Ethiopian realized his need.
- C. If you realize the value of your soul, it is not too far to church. Matt. 16:26.

### III. IT DEPENDS ON YOUR GRATITUDE TO GOD.

READ LUKE 17:11-18.

- A. Remember your temporal blessings, James 1:17.  
[God] did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven & fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with good & gladness (Acts 14:17).

He gives to all life, breath & all things. (Acts 17:25).

- B. Remember the spiritual blessings that are yours in Christ  
Eph. 1:3
- C. If you are properly grateful to God for all these blessings, it is not too far to church.

IV. IT DEPENDS ON YOUR DESIRE FOR FELLOWSHIP. Joint participation toward a common goal.

A. Fellowship with the saints. READ HEBREWS 10:24-26.

B. Fellowship with God, 1 Cor. 10:16; 1 John 1:7.

V. IT DEPENDS ON YOUR ZEAL FOR LOST SOULS.

READ MATTHEW 5:13-16.

VI. IT DEPENDS ON YOUR DESIRE TO WORSHIP & REVERENCE GOD.

A. Wise men traveled 1,000 miles to worship Jesus as a baby, Matt. 2:1.

B. Wise as they were, they did not know 1/10 of what we know about Jesus. He died in our place so we could live forever in heaven. It is not too far for wise men & women to come to church regularly, faithfully.

VII. IT DEPENDS ON WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS.

READ LUKE 12:13-17, 20-21, 31-34.

CONCLUSION: This poem was written by George C. Degen:

A Mile And A Half From Church

We're a mile and a half from church, you know,  
And it rains today, so we can't go.  
We'd drive an hour to a party or show  
Though the rains should fall and the winds should blow.  
That's why when it rains we just can't go.  
But we always go to the things we like  
And we ride if we can. If we can't, we hike.

We're a mile and a half from church, you know,  
And a tire is flat, so we can't go.  
We'd fix it twice to make a visit

And if there's a ball game we wouldn't miss it.  
We'd mend the tire if at all we could,  
And if we couldn't, we go afoot,  
For hunting pleasure is all the style,  
So the church will have to wait a while.

We're a mile and a half from church, you know,  
And our friends are coming, so we can't go.  
To disappoint our friends would be unkind,  
But to neglect worship, we don't mind.  
If we may please our friends on earth  
And spend a day in feasting and mirth.  
But sometime when we come near the end of our days  
We'll go to church and mend our ways.

We could be closer to the end of our days than we realize.

Springhill, LA, July 16, 1972  
Malvern, AR, July 26, 1972  
Greenwood, AR, July 30, 1972  
Waldron, AR, July 30, 1972  
Smyrna, Atlanta, TX, June 4, 1974 (meeting)  
La Porte, TX, November 21, 1976  
Exton, PA, July 15, 1984  
Exton, PA, October, 1990  
Shiloh, Mexia, TX, November 6, 1994  
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, July 18, 1999