

Would Someone Be Concerned About You?

One Sunday morning, while I was preaching in North Mississippi, my family and I arrived at the meeting house about thirty minutes early, as was our custom. It was raining that Sunday morning, not a hard rain, just a steady drizzle. When we arrived at the building, we expected to find an older brother (somewhere in his eighties) already there, sitting in his old, green pickup waiting for others to arrive. However, since we occasionally arrived before he did, we were not concerned for a few minutes. But, when he was not there within a few minutes, we became concerned about him. Since he lived only a short distance from the church building, I decided to go see about him. When I arrived at his house, it was obvious why he had not made it to the building. While backing his pickup out of his driveway, he had backed into a ditch across the road. But, unlike some who, since it was raining, would have just gone back into the house and stayed home, missing services completely, he had walked about a half a mile to a neighbor's house to get him to come and pull his pickup out of the ditch. Well, by this time Mr. Jim's clothing was wet, not soaking, but wet enough that I suggested that he might want to change into some dry clothes, which most people would have taken time to do. He said, however, that he didn't think that would be necessary. You see, Mr. Jim did not want to be late for services. So, as soon as he had tried to pay the man for pulling his pickup out, he drove on to services. He apparently had not even thought about staying at home. And, no, he did not catch a cold from getting wet and then coming on to services without changing into dry clothes.

Why was I so concerned about Mr. Jim Griffin? Well, I had been at that congregation long enough to know that he would be at services and be there early, unless he was sick or something drastic had happened. Mr. Jim was not the only one in the congregation who had not arrived when I became concerned enough to go and see about him. In fact, my family and I were the only ones present at the time. But I was not concerned about the absence of anyone else, or even the fact that they might be late. In fact, I would have been surprised to see some of them present at services, had they been in the same circumstances as this elderly brother. Some of the others in the congregation would have just waited until it quit raining to get their automobile out of the ditch and just missed services completely. But I knew that Mr. Jim did not miss and was always present long before time for services to begin. So, I became concerned enough about his absence to go see about him.

What about you? When you are not present before time for services to begin, do brethren become concerned and worry about you, or do they know it is your "custom" (Heb 10:25) to be late or to miss the services completely? I have known members, even Bible class teachers, who would come in several minutes after classes had already started. If your attendance record is such that no one becomes concerned

when you have not arrived at least a few minutes before time to begin, or if you are not present at all, then you need to stop and examine your practice and maybe make some changes in your attitude toward your attendance of the services of the Lord's church. Remember, David said: "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." Psa. 122:1

(JLH)