

MUST WE ALWAYS BE AT A CHURCH ASSEMBLY TO WORSHIP?

Brother Waddey: We have an Annual Ladies Retreat hosted by one of the congregations in our area. It is held over a weekend and the women have their own worship service on Sunday. The host congregation is about 30-45 minutes away from the location with another congregation just 15 minutes away. What do you think of this practice? George

Dear Bro. George: Remember that Solomon and Stephen both said that "the most high dwelleth not in houses made with hands" (Acts 7:48). We do not have to be in a "church building" to worship acceptably. In terms of history church buildings emerged long after the church began. Also Jesus said where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst (Matt. 18:20). So long as the worship offered is in spirit and in truth (John 4:24) and according to God's Will the ladies can worship as acceptably there as in a church building. In Bible Camps and Retreats brethren commonly worship at the site of their meeting. It would be inconvenient and time consuming for them to get dressed and made up suitable for a church assembly where other worshipers were dressed and coiffured as usual. Also the time and logistics of transporting a large group to a meeting place. At the encampment they can assemble and worship without all of that. Another way to see this is to imagine yourself on a ship crossing the Pacific. What do you do when the Lord's Day comes. If other Christians are on board you get together in someone's cabin and sing, pray, commune and study Scripture. So when at camp, when no men are present women can conduct their worship since in doing so they would not be teaching or having authority over men (I Tim. 2:12).

JHW