

“Is it a sin to not go to church?”

Before answering that question, let me clarify that “church” is not so much a place where you go but an identity that you have. The church is not the building but the Body. If you believe in Jesus for eternal life, you belong to the church, the Body of Christ.

So the better question is, “Is it a sin not to assemble with other believers?” In that case, it helps to remember there are two kinds of sins.

There are sins by commission and sins by omission. In other words, you can sin by breaking a command, or you can sin by failing to fulfill it.

So, for example, beating and robbing a stranger on the road is sin by commission because you have broken the command: “Thou shalt not steal.”

But if you came across that same stranger, lying bloody and bruised in the street, and did nothing to help him, that would be sin by omission because you failed to fulfill the command to “Love your neighbor.”

So, is not assembling with other Christians a sin? The answer is “Yes,” in both senses.

First, you are commanded to assemble with other believers (Heb 10:25). If you don’t, you’re breaking that command. That is sin by commission.

Second, it is also sin by omission. How? You will find many “one another” commands in the New Testament that describe your duties to other people in the local church.

Here are just a few of them:

- Live in harmony with one another (Rom 12:16)
- Serve one another (Gal 5:13)
- Forgive one another (Eph 4:32)
- Sing to one another (Eph 5:19)
- Instruct one another (Rom 15:14)
- Build each other up (1 Thess 5:11)
- Love one another (John 13:34)

Can you fulfill any of these commands if you avoid meeting with other Christians? No, of course not. So it is a sin by omission.

But just to be clear, I’m talking about people who are able to meet but choose not to. If you aren’t able, then you aren’t responsible.

But instead of emphasizing the bad news, let me tell you the good news: God designed you for community—i.e., for you to function within a body.

Every believer functions within the church just like an organ functions in the human body. The body needs all of its organs to be healthy. It's the same in the local church. I need you, and you need me, and we need each other to be healthy and strong.

So, is it a sin not to go to church? Yes. But instead of focusing on the sin, focus on the blessing.

It's a blessing to gather in Jesus' name.  
It's a blessing to be encouraged, built up, instructed, and refreshed by the Word of truth.

And it's a blessing to be a blessing to others by helping with your gifts.

Why would you want to stay away and be separated from those blessings?

Maybe instead of asking if you have to attend church, you should ask how often you can attend, knowing the early Christians gathered daily (cf. Acts 2:46).