

# Chapter 1

## Why Have a Bus Meeting?

When I was Pastor of Landmark Baptist Temple in Flint, Michigan, I did a little survey in our bus meeting one Saturday morning. I asked several of my bus captains to give a brief testimony on what the bus meeting meant to them as a person and to their bus routes as a whole. Following are some of those testimonies:

**Testimony No. 1** *"The bus meeting gives me strength,"* said one of our captains who holds down a full-time job, is the bus mechanic in our ministry, a father of two children, and a devoted husband. *"Serving in the bus ministry is the single hardest thing that I do in life."*

**Testimony No. 2** *"The bus meeting makes me accountable,"* said another. *"Having a set time to meet keeps me faithful. With the responsibilities of being a mother and a wife, I need something to motivate me. It also encourages me to stay in the bus ministry when I want to quit."*

**Testimony No. 3** *"The bus meeting keeps me so excited that I can hardly stand it,"* said one captain who works the midnight shift in

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a factory. *"After getting only two hours of sleep on Saturday morning, I need something to get me going. Also, if I was not accountable to be in the meeting, it would be very easy for me to stay in bed."*

**Testimony No. 4** *"The bus meeting, for me, is a place where we can have fun and be ourselves with others that share in the work,"* said another. *"In here, the bus kids are not just mine, but ours. We share their needs with each other and our dreams of what we want them to become."*

**Testimony No. 5** *"The bus meeting reminds me of the tremendous need that these kids have,"* said a lady who runs her own business and is a wife and mother. *"When I come to the bus meeting, often I have my mind on the things of this world. The testimonies and the preaching reset my heart and give me a new desire to reach young people for the cause of Christ."*

The bus ministry requires a lot of work if you are going to be successful. Your bus workers are the hardest working people in your church, and they can carry the heaviest load. They need the bus meeting to help them stay faithful. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of having a bus meeting for your bus workers. Let me share with you the principle of having a meeting time for your bus workers.

In the book of Hebrews the principle of assembling is given. This principle has been a blessing to me as I have applied it in my ministry. I use it, with amazing results, in every ministry that we have. It is a very common principle, but most of us have restricted its use or its application to church attendance only.

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Hebrews 10:25 says, **"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."**

God says that we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. The principle of assembling teaches us that strength and encouragement can be gained from each other. It teaches us that we are part of a team. It shows us the strength that comes from not being divided. It teaches us that drawing strength from each other can be a tremendous help to us as we reach our areas for Christ.

It was in an assembly in an upper room that the early church was empowered to go out and preach the Gospel to every creature.

Now let us look at the principle of assembling by studying four important points found in Hebrews 10:25.

### ***1. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together . . . "***

Notice that this statement does not say, "not forsaking the church," even though I certainly believe that church attendance is a part of the admonition given here. It says, ***"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together . . . "*** God knows that we must be around others of our own kind. We need to get together and exhort one another. If we forsake the assembling of ourselves together, we will miss the much needed encouragement that helps keep us motivated in the work of the Lord. We are to assemble regardless of the endeavor. We are not to forsake it. We are to be faithful in assembling.

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Every general assembles his troops before going into battle. He knows that he must prepare his soldiers mentally and emotionally for the task at hand. He knows that meeting together will help focus them.

Every coach assembles his team before marching onto the playing field. He knows that if his team is to believe that what they are doing at this very moment is the most important thing in the world, he is going to have to assemble with them and charge them up. He knows that all the training in the world will be futile unless he can help them to focus on the game that they must play today.

Every pastor and bus director who want to be successful will assemble their workers before sending them out into the highways and hedges to fight Satan for the souls of men.

My friend, the battle that we fight as soldiers of the cross is more important than all of the domestic wars that have been fought throughout all the ages put together. We must not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. We must not leave behind the strength and encouragement that comes from assembling. "Forsake it not!" is the cry of our Lord.

Our Lord did not send His church into the war over souls until they had assembled in the Upper Room. And it was there that they received power. It was there that the Holy Ghost came upon them. It was in the assembly that God prepared them to go into a lost and dying world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

I do not know of a successful church or ministry that does not practice the principle of assembling.

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### **2. " . . . as the manner of some is . . . "**

There will always be those who do not think that the bus ministry is important. And there will always be those who want to stray from Bible methods and forsake the principle of assembling. But don't listen to them. Their negative approach to the ministry comes because they are lazy and do not want to do the work that it takes to plan and orchestrate a bus meeting. Assembling takes a lot of work and planning. Some may not assemble, but if you want to have a productive ministry, if you want to see souls saved regularly, if you want to be part of seeing literally hundreds and thousands of souls gloriously saved, if you want to see hundreds of lives changed, then do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together.

The reason that so many churches never see their altars flooded and their baptismal waters troubled is because they do nothing to encourage it. They serve the Lord in word, but not in deed. They are like whited sepulchres full of dead men's bones. They preach the deeper life, but they never experience it. God says that we should not be like them, but we should assemble ourselves together and prepare ourselves to carry out the Great Commission.

We do not have to be like the thousands of churches in this country that have not seen one single soul saved or baptized in a year's time. We do not have to look at empty altars and empty pews week after week. We can see God move with great power in our community and proclaim as did those faithful saints in Acts 4:16, *"Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it."*

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### **3. " . . . but exhorting one another . . . "**

The word **exhort** comes from the Greek word *parakaleo* which means *to urge one to pursue some course of action*. If there has ever been a day when God's people need urging, it is today. With our fast-paced lifestyles, our jobs, our families, and almost every circumstance imaginable, we desperately need to be exhorted.

Notice that this verse says to exhort "one another." Assembling gives us the opportunity to exhort or urge one another to a course of action. There is something about being around people who think like we think that encourages us to keep on going. This means that the very presence of another person can urge us to keep on going. Ecclesiastes 4:9,10 says, ***"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up."*** The principle of assembling teaches us that there is strength in numbers. We need each other.

Bus workers are the hardest working people in our churches and have to endure many trying circumstances to do God's work. They need an assembly time to exhort one another to be faithful and to keep going for the cause of Christ.

Two are better than one. The Scripture says, ***"For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow."*** We need each other's strength. We need each other's encouragement. We need the exhortation that comes from our fellow workers. We need the fellowship that we receive from being around those who are involved in the work of the bus ministry.

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### 4. " . . . and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

As the days grow more evil, our people are going to face more resistance in the work of the Lord. As the day of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ approaches, we need more than ever to assemble. The truth is, time is running out. If we do not reach these poor families today, they may just never have an opportunity to be saved. We must intensify our efforts to get the Gospel out and bring the sinner to Jesus. And to do that, we must assemble more so that we can be exhorted to serve.

"So much the more" is the call. "So much the more" we need to assemble. "So much the more" we need to exhort. "So much the more" we need to train. "So much the more" we need to motivate. "So much the more" we need to help our workers be all that they can be and do all that they can do before our Lord returns. The principle of assembling teaches us that the more we assemble, the more prepared we will be to handle the resistance of Satan and meet our Lord with confidence.

\* ***Why have a bus meeting?*** Because our workers need it. They need to be challenged and encouraged. Paul told Timothy to "***stir up the gift of God, which is in thee . . .***" (II Timothy 1:6) The bus meeting can be a wonderful tool to stir up your workers for lost souls.

***Why have a bus meeting?*** Because it gives you a chance to train your workers. Paul told Timothy, in II Timothy 2:2, "***And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.***"

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It has been said that to be successful, one must not only do things right, but one must do the right things. It is a Scriptural method for doing a spiritual work. The bus meeting will give you valuable teaching time. It will allow you and your workers to exhort one another. It will give you an opportunity to maximize your efforts. It will allow you to make full proof of the ministry. The bus meeting will help you to get the most out of the time and money that is invested in this vital work. It will keep your workers so excited that they can hardly stand it.

Hebrews 10:25 is a command of God to assemble ourselves together and to exhort one another. If we are to press toward the prize of the high calling of God, we are going to have to have an assembly. Let us make the bus meeting the most important part of the bus ministry. Schedule it on Saturday just before our workers go out into the highways and hedges that they may be enthusiastic about this greatest of all causes - leading boys and girls to our wonderful Saviour.

### *PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER*

- ◆ Strength and encouragement can be gained from each other.
- ◆ The more we assemble, the more prepared we will be to handle the resistance of Satan.
- ◆ There is strength in fellowship.