

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,
as the manner of some is.

Hebrews 10:23–25

TAKE HEED, THEN, often to come together to give thanks to God, and show forth His praise. For when ye come frequently together in the same place, the powers of Satan are destroyed, and his “fiery darts” urging to sin fall back ineffectual. For your concord and harmonious faith prove his destruction, and the torment of his assistants. Nothing is better than that peace which is according to Christ, by which all war, both of aerial and terrestrial spirits, is brought to an end. *For we wrestle not against blood and flesh, but against principalities and powers, and against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places.*

St Ignatius the God-bearer, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, ch. xiii
Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, p. 55

THE BEGINNING OF THE DARKENING OF THE MIND (once a sign of it is visible in the soul) is to be seen, first of all, in slothfulness with regard to the [*church*] services and prayer. For except the soul first fall away from these, she cannot be led in the way of error; but as soon as she is deprived of God’s help, she easily falls into the hands of her adversaries.

St Isaac the Syrian, *Ascetical Homily 2*, pp. 122–23
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THEY USED TO SAY ABOUT A CERTAIN MONK who lived in a monastery of the brotherhood, that although he kept frequent vigil and prayed, he was neglectful about praying with the congregation. And one night there appeared unto him a glorious pillar of brilliant light from the place where the brethren were congregated, and it reached up into the heavens; and he saw a small spark which [*flew*] about the pillar, and sometimes it shone brightly, and sometimes it was extinguished. And whilst he was wondering at the vision, it was explained to him by God, Who said, “The pillar which thou seest is the prayers of the many [*brethren*] which are gathered together and go up to God and gratify Him; and the spark is the prayers of those who dwell among the congregation, and despise the appointed services of the brotherhood. And now, if thou wouldst live, perform that which it is customary to perform with the brethren, and then, if thou wishest to do so, and art able to pray separately, do so.” And the monk related all these things before the brotherhood, and they glorified God.

Paradise of the Holy Fathers, tr. Budge, Vol. II, pp. 30–1, # 135

PEARLS FROM THE HOLY FATHERS

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