

This more intimate type of greeting cannot be accomplished either by letter, or, over the internet. Even Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, didn't claim his letter's greeting could convey a "holy kiss." The instructed "holy kiss" could only be accomplished by the letter's recipients who would meet together. Any who obeyed would have to come together into the same place to do so.

I've tried "hugging" my grandchildren over an internet conferencing system. We end up laughing over the silliness. We all really know the internet hug just isn't the same. Let's not fool ourselves into believing otherwise.

This past weekend, we met, in person, with a beloved assemblage of Christians. We enjoyed the reality of loving hugs. Some local churches we know have refused to discontinue what God commands. They have been meeting, in person, all along. I commend them for their courage in Christ!

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GATHER
TOGETHER

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God tells Christians to build up one another in worshiping Him. This also prepares us to reach out with the wonderful Gospel of Christ's grace.

"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:"
(Hebrews 10:23-24)

In the very next verse we receive significant instruction regarding how to do this. Christians are to gather together!

"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."
(Hebrews 10:25)

In days gone by, it was pretty clear what this meant. However, in recent days, we Christians have managed to conveniently confuse ourselves based on the existence of new technology. Some claim that this technology allows us to satisfy this requirement remotely. It doesn't! Throughout Christian history, it has been understood that this gathering together involves

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being together "in one place." This was true even when they had to meet secretly for fear of persecution.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." (Acts 2:1)

We Christians have recently been faced with situations tempting us to equivocate on this commitment. After all, isn't meeting via an internet based connection sort of the same as meeting in one place? The answer is "No!" Consider the following Scriptures in which the Apostle Paul provides identical instructions to each of multiple gatherings of Christians.

"Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you."
(Romans 16:16)

"All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss."
(1 Corinthians 16:20)

"Greet one another with an holy kiss."
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"Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss."
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