

## Quarterly Meetings

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The idea of quarterly meetings, as held by Seventh-day Adventists, was first suggested by Elder James White and his wife, about the year 1864. At first the ordinances were celebrated in connection with the regular monthly meeting, when every church was expected to have all its members together, or to know the spiritual standing of each. Then once in three months, groups of churches within thirty or forty miles of one another met, about the closing Sabbath and First-day of the quarter, for preaching and social services, and for the transaction of any business of the cause that should be considered. It was made a point to have, if possible, all members assemble, or to know the standing of every member in that district. Sometimes the communion service was administered.

Some years later, by vote of the General Conference, it was recommended that the communion service be attended the first Sabbath in the regular quarter of the year.

At first, and for several years, when most of our churches were much smaller than now, the list of members was read, and a personal response made. A written testimony was expected from absent members. Such a course tended to preserve a live membership, and was a great aid to the spiritual condition. When persons absented themselves, the reason was sought out.

Later on, the first idea of grouping churches for quarterly meeting was dispensed with. Then the larger churches adopted a plan of dividing the members present into groups, with a leader in each to call the names for responses. Still later, it would seem that some, by dropping the idea of ascertaining the actual condition of each member at least once in three months, failed to realize the responsibility the church should feel for its members. At the present time, when the quarterly meeting is held, many have simply a brief service for the ordinance of humility and the communion, hardly taking time even for testimonies. It has seemed to me that, while it may not be convenient to carry out the plan of dividing the church into groups, it would be a wonderful uplift in this cause to make more of these occasions, by learning the spiritual condition of every member, and enlisting all to take some active part, either in personal effort or with their means, in spreading the light of present truth.

Two important cautions are given to the people of the Lord in these times: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness["stupefied with gluttony," Syriac Version], and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." Luke 21:34. "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; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Heb. 10:24, 25. May the Lord give to all in responsible places in the churches that wisdom, zeal, and love for souls which will lead to the accomplishment of the original plan in establishing quarterly meetings; namely, a special uplift for all the members of the church once in three months.

J. N. Loughborough. Advent Review And Sabbath Herald, July 7, 1910.