

Spiritual Disciplines Within The Church

Chapter 1: Why Go to Church?

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go unto the house of the Lord.'" (Ps. 122:1)

Introduction:

Why should I read anything about going to church?

- God has spoken in the Bible about going to church.
- Those of us who attend church need to evaluate our reasons and make sure that our basis for going is not habit alone.
- You may not need persuading, but the information in this book can be useful in talking to your children.
- Anyone who claims to follow Christ needs to be challenged with what the Bible says about going to church.
- Even though you may have been faithful in church for a long time, you are no longer sure about continuing.

The following are just a few reasons of why people do not attend church:

- Turned off by what seems an endless asking for money.
- Services bore them.
- The sermons are irrelevant to their lives.
- When they do attend, they leave feeling guilty.
- Sunday is the only day off.
- They must work on Sunday.
- They had a bad experience.
- They have not been invited.
- They would feel uncomfortable going alone.
- Think their lifestyle is too unacceptable to the expectations of churchgoers.
- They are convinced church has nothing to offer them.
- There isn't time.
- **Going to church is a Biblical requirement for all Christians.**

A recent survey of a cross section of Americans shows that almost half agree that "the Bible does not command people to attend a church; that is a man-made requirement." In fact, the Bible is very plain: *"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; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."* (Heb. 10:24-25) This command was not given whimsically. The church is not a department store where you come and get the spiritual commodity you want, then go your way. To speak of loving Christ while neglecting His body, the church, is hypocritical. (Eph. 1:23; 4:12, 15-16; 5:29-30)

Benefits

I. Going to church helps prevent backsliding and apostasy.

A. Spiritual erosion was taking place within those who had gotten into the habit of neglecting the meetings of church. (*Heb. 10:25*)

“Statistics show that if you don’t go to church for a month, the odds are almost two-to-one that you won’t go for more than a year.”

B. If you can miss church and not *miss* church, then something is absent from your heart and faith.

II. Going to church brings spiritual fellowship and encouragement.

A. One of the four main characteristics of the church’s gatherings was “fellowship. (*Acts 2:42*)

1. No Christian can thrive without the two spiritual nutrients: fellowship and encouragement. (*Heb. 10:25*)

2. Only Christians can fellowship, at least in the Biblical sense.

B. The church provides ways in which to receive encouragement:

1. Preaching and teaching of God’s Word. (*Rom. 15:4-5*)

2. Perseverance of other believers.

3. The example of more mature believers.

4. Church members who struggle successfully with some of the same daily issues we face.

5. Praying and singing praises of God and others.

“If a child is going to be emotionally healthy, he needs the socialization and encouragement a family can provide. In the same way, every child of God needs the fellowship and encouragement that God intends for him to receive from a church family if he is going to be spiritually healthy.”

III. Going to church expresses obedience to the greatest commandment. (Mark 12:28-30)

A. Is God your greatest love and highest priority?

B. We should go to church because we love God more than anyone else.

IV. Going to church follows Jesus’ example. (Luke 4:16)

A. “And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. . .”

B. Jesus had spiritual and eternal reasons He could have given for not having time for corporate worship.

V. Going to church is a testimony of support for God’s work in the world. (Matthew 12:30)

A. Gathering or scattering?

B. Do people see what is important to you?

VI. Going to church enables you to hear in person the preaching of God's Word.

- A. God has ordained preaching. (II Tim. 4:2-4)
- B. No Christian should substitute a media ministry for attending a local church.
 - 1. In media preaching you have the ability to turn it off. (II Tim. 4:3)
 - 2. The sense of immediacy is absent in media preaching.
 - 3. It fosters inevitable individualization.

"Watching church instead of attending tends not only to breed disloyalty to the church but to foster an isolated, private, and individualistic kind of Christianity; and that is not the kinds of Christianity nourished in the Bible."

VII. Going to church allows you to take the Lord's Supper. (I Cor. 11:26)

VIII. Going to church enables you to experience special blessings from God.

- A. There are blessings the Father gives only in the context of public worship. (I Cor. 14:26, 31)
- B. God blesses us with strength, instruction, and encouragement when we come together at church to worship Him.

IX. Going to church helps prevent an unbalanced Christian life.

- A. Christians who do not attend church are usually the most unbalanced Christians.
- B. God gives gifted individuals to the church to equip and strengthen her. (Eph. 4:11-16)

X. Going to church is one indication of eternal life.

- A. Church attendance is no proof that a person has eternal life. (Jn. 3:14)
- B. Those who "have passed from death to life" are compelled by a oneness with others who have eternal life.

XI. Not going to church is one indication of *NOT* being in God's family.

"Anyone who, without regret, is persistently willing to disobey the Lord's command to meet with the people of God when they gather for public worship, and who is willing to forsake all the privileges and blessings God provides through the local church, may have some "religion", but he or she does not have biblical Christianity."

- A. Going to church does not make you a Christian.
- B. Going to church is vital for Christians.
- C. Not going to church is self-centered and foolish.
- D. Not going to church is willful disobedience to the authority of God.
- E. No church will be perfect or free from offensive things.

**Do you despise the church of God? (I Cor. 11:22)*