

You Should Be Committed: Believers...Assemble! Psalm 22:22-31

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Twelve reasons why a local pastor stopped attending athletic events:

Every time I went, they asked me for money.

The people with whom I had to sit didn't seem very friendly.

The seats were too hard and not comfortable.

The coach never came to call on me.

The referee made a decision with which I could not agree.

I was sitting with some hypocrites--they came only to see what others were wearing.

Some games went into overtime, and I was late getting home.

The band played some numbers that I had never heard before.

The games are scheduled when I want to do other things.

My parents took me to too many games when I was growing up.

Since I read a book on sports, I feel that I know more than the coaches anyhow.

I don't want to take my children because I want them to choose for themselves what sport they like best.

Sound familiar? Last week, we discussed the "top ten" reasons why people don't attend church. This week, we are going to look at the opposite side of the issue:

The Top Ten Reasons for Going to Church

#1 Shows Our Love Toward God

What is the motivation of the Christian in attending church? It should be first and foremost, because of a love for God. I have talked to quite a few people that say that they love God, but never set foot in a church. That would be like saying that you love your family with your whole heart and then do all you can to never spend time with them.

Look at what the Word of God says about love for God, as shown by our praising Him in the assembly of believers: **Ps. 22:22** – "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you." **Heb. 2:12** – "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." Loving God includes public admission and public demonstration of loving God. Each person does this to a different degree, but would include simply being in church!

#2 The Lord's Presence

Ps. 22:3 – "Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel."

The Hebrew word for enthroned speaks of sitting and inhabiting. When we gather together as Christians God is both exalted in the praises of His people and actually inhabits the praise of His people. God is present in a special way when His people assemble. In the church service, in prayer, in fellowship, in discipleship we experience His very presence.

#3 Obedience to God

Heb. 10:24-5 – "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

The word for meeting or assembling in Koine Greek means "a complete collection" which means everyone together. This does not allow only for some, but means ALL. **Acts 2:42** – "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer." There is no doubt whatsoever that the pattern of the early church was to assemble

together. Jesus said in **Jn 15:5** – “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

It is human nature--the fallen human nature-- to want to do things on our terms. We want to have things our way. We want to have God conform to us, but instead we are to conform to God.

#4 Remembering the Lord's Day

Ex. 20:8 - "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." We are called upon to have one day per week to give to God, and to rest. It was said by Jesus Himself: "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." The idea is twofold: It is a time to remember and assemble with God.

Did you know that when the nation of Israel was in the wilderness, the camp was set up so that there would be a maximum of 2,000 feet for a person to walk to the tabernacle? The reason why is that a person would have only so far to go, to have a day of rest and to dedicate that day to the Lord. God Himself gives the believer rest and refreshment on that day.

The day of worship for the believer in Christ changed for a number of reasons in the early church. The Sabbath--Saturday--was the last day of the week. The Lord's Day--the day he was resurrected from the dead--was on the first day of the week. The emphasis now became starting out the week with Jesus instead of ending it that way. Our week should be a build up to the Lord's Day, and then the Lord's Day starts our week off on the right foot building up to the next Lord's Day.

We remember the Lord's Day, we gather together, because of Jesus...(Gospel application)

#5 Accountability to Spiritual Leadership

Another reason why we are to gather together frequently is to be in submission to those in leadership. Obedience, however, is not blind and the leadership should never ask or imply that you should do something unholy.

However, people in general do not want to be told what to do. They want to say, as some do-- "You're not the boss of me!" However, good leadership's motivation is not to rule over anyone, it is instead to help you, love you and to keep you on the narrow path! If a person is all by themselves in their own little worship time at home, no one is telling them to change. The vast majority of televangelists never talk about the sanctification of building up of the believer, but instead about the gratification of the listener!

#6 Spiritual Strength Building

God has called people to be evangelists and pastors and teachers so that the saints of God may be equipped for the work of ministry. The reason? So that we would no longer be spiritual infants and act like the world, or be tricked by the varying winds of doctrine. Ever talk to someone that does not go to church and find out they have the craziest of beliefs? That's because they do not want to be taught, to be told they are wrong and will fall for the trickery of men. Instead, the church is a spiritual gym where people's spiritual muscles are strengthened.

#7 Fellowship with Other Christians

Acts 2:41 - "So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls." Notice that the church grew in number and then they stuck together? One huge reason was their fellowship together. Fellowship is sharing ones joys and their griefs: the high points of life, and carrying the burdens of those that are hurting.

A song by Casting Crowns hits the nail on the head. Stained Glass Masquerade speaks of everyone in church being happy with painted grins, and the person in the song is hurting from

sin and needs help. He has the idea that if he does the same thing that he will believe it too. In true fellowship, we are to pick each other up.

#8 Corporate Prayer

Mt. 18:19 – “Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.” The idea from this passage of Scripture is not for two people in the congregation to agree that they want BMWs, but instead that when they gather together with like mind IN CHRIST, and whatever they ask for according to God's will shall be done.

There is power in the prayers of Christians, but more so when they gather together. The prayer life of a Christian is often compared to the coals in a campfire. When the logs burn down, there are many coals together that burn and give off light and warmth, and they last for a good while. However, when one coal is removed from the fire and isolated it will quickly die out and grow cold.

#9 Blessing to the Christian

The blessing of being in church is that you learn how to live a better life, which is a GODLY life. Not always an easier life, but a profitable, useful life. To go against God's design for people to be together--as the Holy Trinity is together--is to go against the grain of God's design.

#10 Edification of Believers

1 Thess. 5:11 – “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” The church is to equip and build up the believer. It is to bear the burdens and the joys of its people. If a church is not building one another up, then it is not doing its job. If it is not equipping its people, it's not doing its job.

How can a saved person be edified--built up--by other believers other than in the context of a local church? Yes, there is social media such as Facebook but it is not the same as the contact a person has one-on-one with other people. A look of compassion on the face of a brother; the hand on the shoulder by a sister in Christ when the chips are down; the uplifting voices of brothers and sisters lifting voices in praise to God; the fellowship of a common meal at the church potluck or with a LIFE group. The church is a place you can share your gifts, and enjoy the gifts of others.

Friends in Christ: It is the wisdom of the world that says you don't need God and that you do not need your fellow believers. However, it is the wisdom of God that says you need him and your brothers and sisters in Christ. You make a decision either for or against God when it comes to Sunday morning worship, a time when you either honor and bow before God or honor and bow to yourself.

Believers...assemble! In Jesus...Amen!