

The Pastor's Pages



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There is a question that many of us have thought of or heard from those we love and perhaps we have even asked it ourselves, **is it necessary to go to church?** Now there would be many that might think, well, the pastor is obviously going to say it is, but your pastor spent most of his adult life outside of the church. So, I may have something different to offer as an answer to this question.

The first thing we should note is the question itself carries a hidden implication in being asked. That is to say, it is asked from the point that one would want to know if it is okay not to attend. Admittedly, there are many who do not attend and have no desire to. However, as those who follow Christ, we might ask, how does this work?

Why would one not wish to worship God in the assembly of God's people? Having spoken to many who do not attend I can say the reasons are many and varied as the people who don't come. I have used many of the same reasons over the years I did not attend, but that doesn't necessarily make those reasons valid.

The longer that I am here, the more you will hear me repeat different key points of faith and understanding. One thing that I say often is that we read the Bible and often do not see what is right in front of us.

In the Bible there are obvious passages such as the one in Hebrews that tells us to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. Yet, some may say that author was Paul or some other teacher. Was that simply their opinion? For the early Christians worshipped in houses. So what's the problem with staying at home?

Well, there is nothing wrong with assembling at home, but are you inviting all of the body of Christ to your house?

From the beginning we see that God calls a people, not just a person, in Hebrew, *Elohim*, meaning the people of God. God obviously desires a group of people rather than just one person. After all, did Jesus die for just one or for all?

Furthermore, Jesus told us, where two or three gather in my name, there I am in their midst. Look closer at what Jesus tells us. The fact that he is there is one thing we tend to

focus upon, but Jesus is also saying that we should gather in the same sentence. How are we gathered if we are apart?

Communion with others was an important part of culture when Christ walked upon the earth. For that very reason the disciples challenged Jesus when he chose to eat with those that they considered unworthy. Yet, meals were meant to be shared, not eaten alone. When we think of worship our focus is upon a meal that Jesus told us to “do this” in remembrance of me. If we do not come to church among God’s people, do we observe the meal in our homes? Do we worship God in a time put aside in our homes? Those things would not necessarily be a bad thing to do, but I know in my own life that I never worshipped God at home when I wasn’t going to church. Instead, I did what I wanted to with my time. I made myself lord of my life. Simply put, I was Wrong.

Surely, there are times when we may be upset with one another, there may be times when we would simply rather stay in bed or go to a game or event rather than set time aside to worship God at church. But aren’t you glad that God never thought that way? Aren’t you glad that God never thought there was something better to do than to be concerned about you and your salvation?

Perhaps, our taking time to come to church, to praise God in the community of others, the community of saints says a lot about what we really think about God. That we are willing to sacrifice ourselves, our time and our possessions for the one who held nothing back when it came to our salvation.

Is church necessary? If you love God, if you love Jesus, and believe what he taught, I would have to say yes it is. Remember our Lord said, if you love me, you will keep my commandments. That means his desire for us to gather together is important.

I will close with a piece of wisdom from my papaw. He had sisters that were pretty good at not getting along as well as they could. And my papaw with his simple wisdoms asked them, if you can’t get along here, what makes you think you will get along in heaven? I don’t know if I completely agree with this premise, but he makes a pretty good point. Getting along with each other here and worshipping together teaches others and ourselves about forgiveness and God’s kingdom come.

Even so, Come Lord Jesus!

Shalom,

Pastor Faron