

In search of...



Truth & Right

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Why Go to Church?

Recently a friendly waitress asked me, "Why go to church?" I was glad that she asked, gave her some basic reasons, and invited her to come and visit. Her question, however, prompted me to think deeper. The answers I gave her were correct, but I felt I could deepen them in order to provide her with some substantial reasons.

Having reasons to do what we believe and practice is important and of God. Proverbs 16:1 states, "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD." Giving reasons

is not something that comes from a capricious and arbitrary god. Reasons come from a God who desires us to embrace Him freely, and is willing to work with us to supply answers that address our spiritual decisions (Isaiah 1:18). And that is what people need when we are seeking to teach them the gospel. They need answers to their questions that come from God's word. In that vein, let's discuss some reasons in answer to her question, "Why go to church?"

First, God wants you to "go to church" to develop an awareness

that there is something greater than yourself and your personal concerns. This is the goal of worship. When we worship God we acknowledge that God is, well, bigger than us. He stands above all of creation as its Creator. He is the ultimate Giver of life, breath, and all things (Acts 17:25). We depend upon God for our subsistence and for our very being. He gives us such things because He loves us, and we worship Him to acknowledge that love and to confess our own deficiencies. When we so worship God we recognize that life isn't just about us. There is more to our existence than our own selfish concerns. Worship moves us out of ourselves and into a relationship to the Divine whereby God blesses us with His fellowship, love, and joy. The fullness of such a relationship is fulfilled in the worship of the church, and nowhere else.

Second, God wants you to "go to church" to foster moral growth and development. This is the goal of instruction. God's word provides to us everything that is needed to live the best life in relationship both to God and to others. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 states, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." We "go to church" to hear God's word proclaimed and receive that instruction that will furnish us to

every good work. "Going to church" provides us with information to better ourselves individually and in relationship to our fellow.

Third, God wants you to "go to church" to enhance personal relationships with your fellow in the bond of brotherhood. This is the goal of fellowship. When we "go to church" we receive the blessing of fellowship with those who share our values and commitment to doing God's will in our life; we have a "like, precious faith" (2 Peter 1:1). It is much easier to do something when we know there is a group of individuals dedicated to doing it with us. We are also strengthened by being united with others in the faith, and we, in turn, strengthen them as well (Hebrews 10:25). We are able to receive encouragement, positive guidance for the road ahead, exhortation to do what is right, and even, when we need it, a fair word of criticism when we do what we should not. We receive this from those who truly love us, not from those who are merely seeking to exploit us for personal gain.

Fourth, God wants you to "go to church" to personally contribute toward the success of an organization dedicated to the improvement of humanity. This is the goal of giving. It is not enough to simply receive the benefits of a loving God and a faithful church. We must be dedicated to the proposition of giving back something that we

have earned to the Lord. For those who are members of the church, contributions of time, treasure, and talent are enjoined (1 Corinthians 16:1-2, 2 Corinthians 8-9). In giving to the church, we support an organization of love, faithfulness, and mutual edification. We also contribute toward the overall purpose of helping others build their relationship with God, which fuels the growth of the church itself.

Finally, God wants you to “go to church” to make appropriate preparation for life with God in heaven when earthly life ends. The church is the only place for such preparation (Ephesians 5:23). Life on earth is a pilgrimage that will one day end. Jesus has prepared a place for those who want to live with God eternally (John 14:1-4). We must prepare ourselves to live in such a place through righteous and holy living while on earth (1 Peter 1:16, 2:11). God has prepared this holy city for those who diligently seek it (Hebrews 11:16). “Going to church” will give us the necessary environment for faithfulness to the Lord, and citizenship in His heavenly kingdom (Philippians 3:20 ASV).

Not just any church can meet these goals. Only the church about which you read in the Bible is able to provide an individual with the necessary resources to foster faithfulness. Though, there are many churches in the world today, the

one that will give you the resources to finish your course is the church that seeks to follow the pattern for the church set forth in the Bible. Only that kind of church will ensure the fulfillment of these goals in your life. Jesus said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). This applies to the church too! It isn’t enough to simply call Jesus “Lord.” The church to which you go must do the Father’s will.

The churches of Christ seek to do exactly that, and we invite you to “go to church” with us to evaluate whether or not we are doing our best to fulfill in our lives the will of God. We do not claim to be perfect, but like you, we desire: something greater than ourselves; our own moral growth and development; to enhance our personal relationships with those around us; to contribute toward the success of these goals and objectives; and to prepare for life with God in heaven. If you find these to be good reasons to “go to church,” then “go to church” with us.

Kevin Cauley

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Israel's Battles

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-Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim (Ex. 17:8)

-King Sihon came to Jahaz against Israel (Num. 21:23)

-A thousand from each tribe went to war with Midian (Num. 31:4)

-Jericho's walls fell on the seventh day of marching (Josh. 6:15)

-God threw the Amorites into a panic at Gibeon (Josh. 10:10)

-Barak gathered 10,000 men to fight at Kedesh (Judges 4:10)

-Jephthah struck the Ammonites to Minnith (Judges 11:33)

-The Philistines went up against Israel at Mizpah (1 Sam. 7:7)

-Jonathan defeated a garrison of the Philistines (1 Sam. 14:6)

-Israel fled from the Philistines at Mount Gilboa (1 Sam. 31:1)

-David and Israel defeated the Jebusites (2 Sam. 5:6)

-Sheba son of Bichri, rebelled against David (2 Sam. 20:1)