

WHY CHURCH MATTERS

BACKGROUND:

A. If spiritual disciplines are a duty they will soon become a drudgery.

1. God wants spiritual disciplines to be our delight.

Psalms 40:8 NKJ I delight to do Your will, O my God ...

NIV I desire to do your will

NLT I take joy in doing your will

2. This is true regarding the discipline of faithfully attending church.

Psalms 122:1 NKJ I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."

B. There is one way to assure we will always be blessed when we gather!

1. Come to give not receive!

Proverbs 18:16 NIV A gift opens the way for the giver and ushers him into the presence of the great.

2. What can we give?

- * An undivided heart (set aside other things)
- * Passionate worship
- * Receptive spirit (anticipation, expectation)

CHURCH MATTERS because we gather to please God.

Hebrews 10:25 NLT And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near.

A. We don't need to ask, what's in it for us. It's not about us.

1. If we know it pleases God we should not actually need any further motivation.

2. We could actually end the teaching at this point.

- B. There is nothing God asks of us that is merely for His benefit.
1. It is for our good.
 2. This is true regarding coming to church.

CHURCH MATTERS because we hear the Word proclaimed with the anointing of the Spirit.

- A. This was the first reason the early believers gathered together.

Acts 2:42 NIV They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

- B. Pastors are called to proclaim and explain the Word.

1 Timothy 4:13 NIV Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

2 Timothy 4:1-3 NIV ... I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine.

- C. We will receive and understand some things from the Word as we hear it taught that we might not comprehend in our personal times of reading and study.

CHURCH MATTERS because we gather to worship the Lord corporately.

- A. Worship should be happening in our lives daily. Not just here at church.

Psalms 145:1-2 NIV I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.

- B. But there is something special (dynamic, powerful) that is released when we gather together to worship.

Psalms 22:22 NIV I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you.

Psalms 35:18 NIV I will give you thanks in the great assembly; among throngs of people I will praise you.

Psalms 149:1 NIV Praise the Lord. Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints.

C. What is it that happens as we worship?

1. The presence of the Lord comes down and fills our praise. ***Psalms 22:3***
2. Not only do we minister to the Lord but we minister to one another.

Ephesians 5:19 NKJ *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*

CHURCH MATTERS because we build relationships with other believers.

A. God never intended the Christian life to be lived out alone.

<i>John 13:34-35</i>	Love one another
<i>Romans 12:10</i>	Be devoted to one another Honor one another
<i>Romans 12:16</i>	Live in harmony with one another
<i>Romans 15:7</i>	Accept one another
<i>1 Corinthians 1:10</i>	Agree with one another
<i>Galatians 5:13</i>	Serve one another
<i>Ephesians 4:2</i>	Bear with one another
<i>Ephesians 4:32</i>	Be kind and compassionate to one another
<i>Ephesians 5:21</i>	Submit to one another
<i>Colossians 3:13</i>	Forgive one another
<i>1 Thessalonians 5:11</i>	Encourage one another
<i>James 5:16</i>	Pray for one another

B. We need one another!

C. We are rapidly moving into a period of time when we are going to need one another more than ever before.

CHURCH MATTERS because it is the best place to develop / use our gifts in service.

A. Every single one of us have been gifted by God in unique ways.

Romans 12:6 NLT *In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well.*

B. The primary reason God saved us was not merely so we would be saved, but that we could fulfill His purpose for our lives (the reason for being here).

Ephesians 2:10 NIV *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

- C. Church is not the only place we should use our gifts, but it is one of the best places because we can do so as part of a team.

1 Peter 4:10 NLT God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.

BOTTOM LINE:

- A. If we love our church here are seven things we can do:

1. Pray for it fervently
2. Attend it faithfully
3. Support it consistently
4. Serve it joyfully
5. Guard it diligently
6. Represent it positively
7. Invite others frequently

- B. The church is the bride of Christ.

1. We are slowly moving closer to the altar of heaven where the Lord Jesus is waiting for us.

Revelation 19:7 NIV Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

2. Jesus loves His church.
3. Each of us should love the church and celebrate being part of it.