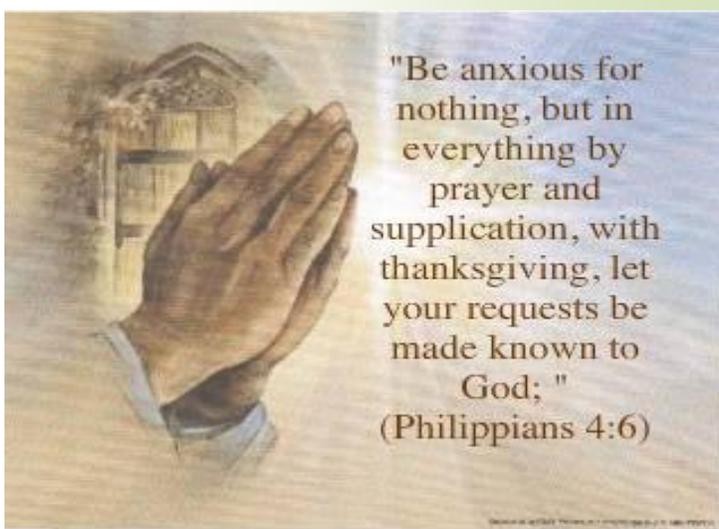


## An answered prayer!



### What an answer to prayer!

I've been praying for God to heal my body so that I might walk again to continue doing his work through Disciple work, joining church service, and attending classes to further understand the God's teachings.

God did answer my prayer, but not the way I thought I wanted him to. Instead, he answered it by giving his church the means to be able to supply material and an amazing builder to build me a ramp so that I can continue the Lord's work!

I thank the Lord for answering my prayers. I also want to thank his church for answering his call to do this.

Allen Insko for his hard work, and warm heart! He worked long hours, and did beautiful work! I am so grateful to him for his faith! He sets a great example for me by showing me what it is like to work for the Lord by giving to others in need.

I can't thank God enough for the blessings he keeps pouring in my life, the lessons he teaches me, and for putting his people in my life!

Thanks be to God for his love!



## A special thank you

We would all like to express our gratitude for Pastor Huesby for delivering God's word in Sunday school and at church service on February 1<sup>st</sup>. It is always a pleasure to have him. We enjoy his energy and love for the Lord. Our prayers are with him always. We are thankful to God for always providing for us in all the things we need!





## **Ten Good Reasons to go to Church *By Dr. Richard P. Bucher***

Why on earth would you, a busy person, want to sacrifice what little R&R time you have to attend public worship regularly? In the final analysis, those who attend public worship regularly do so because they believe they are gaining much more than they are giving up. The benefits of attending far outweigh any deficits (real or imagined). If you have never attended a Christian congregation regularly or have fallen into a habit of not doing so, and especially if you don't feel ready or motivated to go, I invite you to read the following "Ten Good Reasons to go to Church."

### **1. To have fellowship with the crucified and risen Christ**

If you knew that Jesus Himself was going to be at a particular place on a regular basis, would you not be motivated to go? The local Christian congregation is that place. Christians gather publicly to be with their risen Savior. When they worship, the Lord Himself is present!

Though it is true that Christ is always with individual believers, He is present in a unique and special way where Christians gather around the Word. He promised to be where Christians gather: "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20) and "surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Both of these statements are spoken to Christians in the plural, to the believing community. Further, Scripture calls Christians assembled together, "the body of Christ." In other words, the answer to the question, "Where can I find Jesus today?" is "Where Christians gather" for they are His body.

Specifically, Jesus comes among His people through the preached Word and the Sacraments. What Jesus said to the disciples applies to every sermon which proclaims His Word truly: "He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me" (Luke 10:16). We hear the preacher, but it is Christ speaking through Him. The Lord also comes among us through the holy Supper. If it is true that the Lord's Supper is the crucified and risen Christ's body and blood, then this has awesome ramifications. It means that as the people of God receive this meal, they are entering into intimate fellowship with Christ Himself. The Lord's Supper is called "communion" (Greek *koinonia*) because there the people of God have intimate communion with Jesus and with one another (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). After

communing, with Simeon we say, "Lord, lettest now Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation" (Luke 20:29-30).

## **2. To be forgiven**

Why come to church? Because the Lord Jesus is there. And He is there primarily to give forgiveness to all who repent and believe. Proclaiming the full forgiveness that Jesus won for us on the cross is the main point of all Christian worship services. This is the amazing thing about our God. He comes among His people not primarily to receive but to give. To give the precious forgiveness of sins. He does this through the preaching of the Gospel, holy Absolution, and the Lord's Supper. What a joy it is to weary souls who have been struggling with their sin all week to hear and receive God's pardon given through Word and Sacrament.

## **3. To hear the voice of God**

Never before have people been confronted with so many voices. Never before have people been confronted with so many choices. Life can be confusing and at times overwhelming as we try to sift through and sort out right from wrong, truth from error. All the more reason to go to church regularly. For there the voice of God Himself speaks to us through sermon, Scripture, liturgy, and hymnody. God speaks to His people as a whole and He speaks to them individually, guiding them into truth, reminding them of what is right, warning them about what is wrong. His is a voice of strength and comfort, a voice of healing and binding up. His is a voice of sanity amidst the insanity. His is a voice that tells the truth when so many other voices cannot be trusted. How sad when believers pray for guidance but fail to show up at the place that God has chosen to give that guidance.

## **4. To grow in the knowledge of the Bible, God's Word**

This reason is related to the previous one but is not redundant. Here I am responding to a common excuse: "I don't need to go to church to hear the Word; I can read the Bible on my own." On the one hand, private study of God's Word is wonderful. Would that all believers had a daily diet of God's Word! But private study of Scripture must not be a substitute for hearing the preached Word.

Why not? There are two reasons, the first theological, the second practical. Because the Pastor, who holds the divinely appointed preaching office, is, by God's will, the chief teacher of God's Word, the one through whom Christ Himself speaks (see Luke 10:16; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 4:13-16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Hebrews 13:17). The Pastor has been blessed with a gift of teaching. Furthermore, he has gone through extensive schooling and study so as to become an "specialist" in God's Word (though he also is always growing and learning). He has learned Biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. He has spent many years in prayer and study learning God's Word. Why not benefit from his area of expertise?

I find it ironic that though we are willing to acknowledge and turn to self-proclaimed experts in every branch of human knowledge, we do not see the need for an expert in the Word of God. In other words, in so many areas of knowledge we freely admit that we lack the expertise to form judgments and we seek out the experts to help us. We turn to doctors for our health, CPAs for our taxes, auto mechanics for our vehicles, psychologists for our problems, etc. However, when it comes to the Word of God, some apparently know it all. Yes, every Christian can and should read the Bible. Yes, the people of God are to judge the teaching of the Pastor. I am not promoting clergy tyranny. I am warning against lay anarchy.

## **5. To feed your soul**

Feed the soul? Does the soul need nourishment? According to Scripture, yes. There we are reminded that "man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD" (Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4). There we are encouraged, "like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation" (1 Peter 2:2). God's Word is food for the soul. Public worship is the best place to give your soul the Word-of-God-nourishment it needs. In another place Jesus says, "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you" (John 6:27). How tragic to see people zealously provide for their bodies but not their souls.

## **6. To be loved and encouraged**

Why go to church regularly? To be loved and encouraged. We all have troubles. We all face dilemmas and disappointments. We all wrestle with discouragement and heartache. Life can be cruel in a fallen world. What God said of Adam applies to us all: "It is not good for man to be alone." Why bear your burdens alone? Coming to church means interacting with your fellow Christians, the body of Christ. It means receiving an encouraging word, a hug and a smile. It means having someone listen. More profoundly, it is often through His body that Christ speaks the comfort and crucial direction that we need. How often a timely word of Gospel spoken by one Christian to another dispels the gloom! How often one Christian will have a spiritual insight that benefits another. Come to church to be loved and encouraged.

## **7. To be prayed for**

Jesus once promised, "If two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 18:19). There is power when the people of God pray. But for those unfortunate souls who have cut themselves off from regular attendance at the Christian assembly, their needs are unknown, and they pray alone. An often overlooked reason to come to church is to be prayed for.

## **8. To love and encourage your fellow Christians**

At the heart of the Christian ethic is the obligation to love our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus sharpens this in John 13 when He says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one

another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35). The apostle Paul echoes this when he writes, "Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2) and "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith" (Galatians 6:10).

Failing to attend public worship regularly not only transgresses the Third Commandment ("Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy"). It is also transgresses the law of Christ, to love one's fellow Christians and to bear their burdens. When we refuse to gather with our fellow Christians, this is not love! By such refusal we lose touch with them and in most cases have no idea what they are going through. And if we have no idea what they are going through how can we encourage and help them? Furthermore, our absence is a powerful nonverbal discouragement to them. But our presence is a powerful nonverbal encouragement, even when no words are spoken.

### **9. To worship**

That Christians are to worship God publicly is a Biblical given. Behind this given is the reality that we are creatures and God is the Creator. Everything we are and have is a gift from Him. Therefore God richly deserves our worship, our praise, thanks, and prayer. At the heart of New Testament/Christian worship is the gift of forgiveness that God has given us in Jesus Christ. Because God through Christ has forgiven us and given eternal life to us out of pure grace, He richly deserves our public praise and thanks through word and song.

When we worship the true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are doing what we were created to do. Worshiping our Creator is being in sync with who we really are. It is not by accident that the book of Revelation pictures heaven as a place where the ransomed of the Lord will worship God forevermore.

Because we were created to be worshiping beings, we will worship someone or something. Either God, our Creator, who alone deserves our worship, or someone or something else: ourselves, possessions, wealth, a cause, a career, a hobby, or another person.

### **10. To promote the Gospel**

One last reason to attend corporate worship regularly is that by doing so we promote and defend the Gospel. Remember, the Christian Church exists, ipso facto, "to make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). We exist to tell the good news that through Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, God has forgiven humanity and offers heaven as a gift to those who believe this. The Church's main mission is to populate heaven not to make people better (though through the Gospel this happens, too!).

How does attending church regularly promote the Gospel? In a variety of ways. First, by supporting the local congregation through weekly offerings, you allow the Gospel to be

preached to our local communities. Without the financial support of faithful members, such local mission work would cease. Can't financial giving be done without attending? Yes, but apart from the inappropriateness of such non-attending giving, this rarely happens. In reality, only those who attend regularly contribute regularly. Second, as we hear and receive the Gospel through preaching and Sacrament, we are empowered and motivated to share the Gospel out in the world. Third, those who attend regularly give a very positive message to others about what Jesus Christ means to them. He means enough to set aside several hours a week to hear His Word and praise and thank Him. This can't help but attract others to Christ. Fourth, when we come regularly we will from time to time invite others to hear the Gospel.

We hope to see you in God's house soon.