

Pk's Perspectives ... Biblical Basis for the Church Gathered

It's surprising to me how many Christians struggle with the idea of church attendance. Of course, this isn't a new problem. A popular Christian social media catch-phrase is, "You don't go to church, you are the church." While I get the sentiment in some ways, this is an unhealthy view, pitting "being the church" and "going to church" against each other. **If we are truly "the Church," then we will surely get together with other believers regularly. Being the church and gathering as the church go hand in glove.** The "Church" never connotes a single, individual, lone ranger Christian just going about his Christian duties, and never gathering together to worship with other believers. The "Church" by it's very nature means multiple believers, who "where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." (Matthew 18:20)

The Church gathered is both the Biblical and historical pattern modeled for us by the first followers of Jesus. They would get together weekly to worship God together, and at times even daily. They would also share community together in each other's homes. Paul and the other Apostle's letters were actually sent to these church communities that gathered in various cities to be read aloud together. Church means getting together with other believers to worship Jesus Christ, and hear the Scriptures together, and encourage one another in the faith.

Craig Groeschel shared recently, "There is something better. To worship God together and be committed to worship Him together, to hear His Word together. **Do not reduce Church to listening to a podcast or watching an online broadcast. It's so much more than that.** It's community. It's worshiping with others, praying for others, hurting with others, serving others, being involved in the lives of others."

Consider these 4 powerful reasons why you should attend church weekly, and why church attendance can change your life.

- God says in His Word we should attend church regularly. The Church is this important to God, so it should be ever-important to us. God didn't call us to gather and worship to burden us, but to bless us. Church attendance can become one of the greatest blessings in your and your family's life.
- Worshipping Jesus together at church is powerful. Jesus lives inside of us by His Spirit when we believe in Him - this is a profoundly incredible truth! But there is also something biblically powerful about gathering together with other believers to worship. Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." (Matthew 18:20) So He not only lives in us by His Spirit, but He is in the "midst" of us when we gather to worship Him.
- We need Christian community found in the church. All of us long for community and connection with others. God has given us this gift in gathering together for church, and in smaller groups in each other's homes. It fulfills something inside of us to do life with others, encourage each other and be authentically involved in each other's lives. Christian TV, podcasts, books and conferences are wonderful additions to our spiritual lives, but nothing can take the place of consistent Christian community through the local church.
- We grow more spiritually when we gather together at church, than we can all by ourselves. It can be messy when we step into each other's lives. We are all human, and no one is perfect. So it requires effort and intentionality and grace from God to do life together, even as believers. Gathering regularly with other believers becomes a refining process whereby we help each other, pray for each other and encourage each other to want to follow Christ more wholeheartedly. It is a truly beautiful thing.

Dwight L. Moody once stated, "Church attendance is as vital to a disciple as a transfusion of rich, healthy blood to a sick man." I want to encourage you to gather with a church this weekend with the intent of worshiping God and connecting with your brother/sisters in Christ. It'll do you good! Grace & peace, love you. PK