

# Why Go To Church?

Hebrews 10:23-25

*Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. <sup>25</sup>Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

## Intro

Have you ever wondered what or where is the safest place on earth?

Well, statistics don't lie and I want to share with you where the safest place is in the world.

1. First of all riding in automobiles is not the safest place because they are responsible for 20% of all fatal accidents.
2. Being at home is not the safest place because 17% of all accidents occur in your house.
3. Walking on streets or sidewalks is not safe because 14% of all accidents occur to pedestrians.
4. Traveling by air, rail, or water is not safe because 16% of all accidents involve these forms of transportation.
5. Of the remaining places 33% of all deaths occur in hospitals. So hospitals are not the safest places.

But...

You will be pleased to learn that only .001% of all deaths occur in church, and these are usually related to previous physical illnesses. Therefore, logic tells us that the safest place for you to be at any given point in time is at Church!

And mid-week Bible study is safe too! The percentage of deaths during Bible study is even less. So, attend church and Bible studies - IT WILL SAVE YOUR LIFE!

Maybe this could help people consider in attending church more regularly. But this is not the main reason. Here are what some people are saying why they don't attend church regularly or at all.

## Some reasons why people don't attend church (actual quotes)

*"I don't really care much for Sunday services - they have developed into something which makes me uncomfortable - too much about dress and too much pomp and ceremony."*

*"I get angry sometimes when I go to church ... at all the fakey nicey people who wouldn't even want to really be your friend. At our church it is like a concert with people singing on stage more concerned about putting on a good show for the audience."*

*"I go to church, but not every week. I guess I am not as disciplined or don't take it seriously enough to go. I am in a good situation with a good congregation and everyone seems to be very friendly. I guess from past hurts and disappointments, I just have not gotten past them yet."*

*"Five years ago I was in full-time in ministry. After burn out, I stopped going to church. Occasionally, I try going to the churches close to where I live, yet I can't find one. I have no Christian contacts anymore and I'm quite lonely. I feel I have put a wall up between me and others - yes, fear of being hurt again. But how am I ever going to meet other people? I have a boring office job and see no one all day. What am I supposed to do? Sometimes I'd just like to chat to with someone."*

*“I’ve been a praise & worship leader in 2 churches, taught Sunday school, attended cell groups, was on “the board,” and my relationship with Jesus has never been more real since I started spending my time the way God directed me to, rather than how I thought I should. Church became a big production: great music, “properly trained intercessory prayer warriors” ... Whatever happened to just praying for someone, now you need to be properly trained? There are so many people begging for relationship with God, not to mention just good relationships with other people that will actually give you some of their time. People are starving for relationships, period.”*

### Survey

According to the researcher George Barna, what is needed to transform the unchurched is by connecting them closer to God. He said the reason why they don't attend church is not because they are just lazy or not informed.

“They are wholly disinterested in church life - often passionately so,” he said, “Church events cannot effectively compete with what the world has to offer. The only thing the Church can provide that no one else has is a life-changing, practical encounter - and on-going relationship - with the living God and with people transformed by similar encounters. Until such a connection is made, focusing on features, programs and benefits other than such a life-shaping encounter is more likely to lose ground than to gain it.”

In his research Barna also said that: “Millions of young adults are more interested in truth, authenticity, experiences, relationships and spirituality than they are in rules, traditions, events, disciplines, institutions and religion.”

### **The hope of the world is the Church**

Anyone familiar with Bill Hybels from Willow Creek Church has heard him say: “*The hope of the world is the local church.*” I whole heartedly agree.

In the early 1970s when Hybels was studying at Trinity International University a lecturer, challenged the class about an Acts 2-based church. Hybels was captivated with the vision and abandoned his business aspirations for the ministry. He now has a church in Chicago called Willow Creek Church with over 18,000 members.

### **Why church?**

The New Testament repeatedly emphasizes the importance of the local church. In fact, it was the pattern of Paul's ministry to establish local congregations in the cities where he preached the gospel. Hebrews 10:24-25 commands every believer to be a part of such a local body and reveals why this is necessary.

*“And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:24-25).*

It is only in the local body to which one is committed that there can be the level of intimacy that is required for carefully stimulating fellow-believers “to love and good deeds.” And it is only in this setting that we can encourage one another.

The New Testament also teaches that every believer is to be under the protection and nurture of the leadership of the local church. These leaders, pastors, can shepherd the believer by encouraging, admonishing, and teaching. Hebrews 13:7 and 17 help us to understand that God has graciously granted accountability to us through the leadership of the local church.

Furthermore, when Paul gave Timothy special instructions about the public meetings, he said *"Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching"* (1 Timothy 4:13). Part of the emphasis in public worship includes these three things: hearing the Word, being called to obedience and action through exhortation, and teaching of God's Word. It is only in the context of the local assembly that these things can most effectively take place.

Acts 2:42 shows us what the early church did when they met together: *"They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."* They learned God's Word and the implications of it in their lives; they joined to carry out acts of love and service to one another; they commemorated the Lord's death and resurrection through the breaking of bread; and they prayed. Of course, we can do these things individually, but the Lord has called us into His body, the church, to minister to one another and encourage one another..

Public worship has a greater witness to the non-Christian world, which longs for a similar sense of belonging, acceptance and forgiveness for one another's frailties.

Active local church membership is imperative to living a life without compromise. It is only through the ministry of the local church that a believer can receive the kind of teaching, accountability, and encouragement that is necessary for him or her to stand firm in their convictions.

My personal experience:

It was through the church that I came to know Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour and Lord.

It was through the church that I grew in the faith.

It was through the church that I received God's call to go into the ministry full time.

It was through the church that I met my wife.

It was through the church that I my kids came to know Jesus Christ in their lives.

**Conclusion**

Jesus said, *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them."* (Matt. 18:20) Jesus ordained and established the church. It is His body and His bride. We gather in His name to love Him, to proclaim Him, and to encourage each other to follow Him.

Of all the organizations in the world, the church has been given the task of preparing people for heaven. We have a high calling – a mission to be proud of – a ministry to be prayerful for.

Good News Church is 37 years old and we have been providing ministry and mission for over 3 and a half decades. God has been good to us and here we are today still continuing that work. And what is more wonderful are the years that lie ahead for us.

The church's ministry is like a marathon race. Starting the race is important and we're thankful for those who have started the race. Running the race is essential because unless we keep running, the race is over – and here we are still running.

Let's make this place a place where people always feel welcomed, accepted, loved and cared for.

Let's get involved in deeper fellowship with one another.

Take the initiative to gather together for support and care of one another.

*"And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near"* (Hebrews 10:24-25).