

I Love My Church (Part 1) – The Excuses

Hebrews 10:24-25 (Amplified Bible), "And let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities, 25Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching."

Many churches boast hundreds and even thousands on their membership rolls, yet only a small percentage of their "member" are active. As one old honest gentlemen once said, "The FBI couldn't find most of our members."

Why are so many Christian's AWOL in their church attendance? Because they have bought into the lie that "Church is not really that important."

Every Sunday a majority of American's that profess to be Christians don't go to church. They not only don't go to church on Sunday but also don't go any other time during the week either. When asked why they usually have a list of excuses.

A. Many Excuses

I don't believe in organized religion – Many people throw this term out and true Jesus rebuked the Pharisees of His day but religion has to be organized because otherwise it would be an anything goes. If it feels good do it. This is not an attitude that God desires for us. He desires to have a personal relationship with us. (John 3:16 & Revelation 3:20)

Too many hypocrites – Some people don't go to church because they say that there are too many hypocrites in the church. I often answer this comment with "Good that's the best place for them!" It is true that there are hypocrites in the church. In fact I would imagine that if we looked in the mirror closely we would all see some areas that we too have been hypocritical.

· **Too many politics in church** - Other people don't go to church because they say there are too many politics in the church. This is also true. There should be little politics in church. But... what are politics but people striving to get their own

desires and needs met. What we need to do is be striving to fulfill the desires of God.

When we leave the church because of "politics" aren't we really leaving it because we didn't have our own selfish desires met. Just a thought! ☺

- **Someone hurt my feeling.** – Its true people's feelings do get hurt in church sometimes. Why? **Because were imperfect people living in an imperfect world where far too often we are consumed with self.** This in and of itself **isn't** a reason to stop coming to church. I've had my feelings hurt and been offended at the grocery store, restaurants, and just driving down the road. I still go to grocery stores, I still go to restaurants, and I still go to church.

The Bible says *"Love covers over a multitude of sins."* (I Peter 4:8) **Instead of leaving and being bitter with people at the church it would be better to love them!**

- **I don't need the church, I already know it all** – This is a red flag that we have a spiritual problem. We are to continually be growing in our faith.
- **I can worship God anywhere** – This is true but we are commanded to worship God together in church. Corporate Worship provides us with an opportunity to worship God collectively. When we worship and pray collectively God is there! **Matthew 19"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. 20For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."**
- **I don't need the Church** – There are others that don't go to church because they feel that **they don't need the "Church" to be a Christian.** In fact they sometimes go as far as to say that: "they love God but hate the Church." **Is it just me or is there something wrong with this statement?** Keith Drury writes in his book *There is no I in Church*, *"Some will say, 'I love Christ, but I despise the church.' Sorry. You can't behead Christ by taking the head without the body. A religion based on that approach will eventually doom your soul. You will lack needed correction, which is offered only through the church. Christ corrects His individual followers through His body."*

All of these excuses are the result of one reason!

B. One Lie – "Church isn't really that important"

Satan wants us to think we can do it on our own! He knew **Ecclesiastes 4:12 (New International Version)** "**12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.**" When we strive to be a Lone Ranger Christian we will be weaker.

II. Results from staying away from church:

1. **We rob God** by not participating in the place of ministry that He has for us and **thus handicap the church.** (I Corinthians 12) We often also rob God by not paying our tithe that He has commanded us to do. (Malachi 3:10) When we start to forsaking the church we start drawing away from God – Heb 10:22
2. **We rob other** of the blessing that they can receive by ministering to us. (*Prov 27:17*) *17 As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.* When we start to forsake the church we start to lose concern for others and only have time for ourselves.
3. **We rob ourselves** of the blessing that we can receive through ministering to others, through the preaching of the word, through the corporate worship, through testimonies and through fellowship together. Too many people go to church only to receive, however this is only a small part of why we go. **We should also go to give! (Eph 2:10) For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."**

Just because there are hypocrites in the church, just because there are politics in the church and just because churches aren't perfect isn't a reason to stay away or church hop... People are so governed by selfish motives and fulfilling of their own needs, that they will change churches like they change their clothes. They are looking for the perfect church. (If you find the perfect church, once you walk through the doors it will no longer be perfect.)

I believe it is time for Christians across America to begin having a positive and Christian view of the church. The church should not be treated like a secular institution, but like the holy body of Christ!

- ⊙ Keith Drury writes concerning the church, "*It may be flawed, but the body of Christ is the best thing God has going on earth. In fact, it's the only thing. This bride may be imperfect, but the Groom picked her – and His choice is always right. It is impossible to choose Christ but reject His bride and body, so we join with others and participate in carrying out Christ work on earth until He comes again.*"
- ⊙ St. Cyprian: "No one can have God for his Father who has not the Church for his Mother.
- ⊙ Martin Luther to say, "Apart from the church, salvation is impossible." Not that the church provides salvation; God does. But because the "saved" one can't fulfill what it means to be a Christian apart from the church, **membership becomes the indispensable mark of salvation.**
- ⊙ Calvin wrote, "So highly does the Lord esteem the communion of His church that He considers everyone a traitor and apostate from religion who perversely withdraws himself from any Christian society which preserves the true ministry of the word and sacraments."

The Groom is coming soon for His Bride. Will he find a Bride that is anticipating His arrival or a Bride that is consumed with self? *Matthew 25:13 (Amplified Bible)* "*Watch therefore [give strict attention and be cautious and active], for you know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man will come.*"

Next week – I love my church – Part 2 The Benefits.