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Why Do People "Go To Church?"

ACTS 2:41-47

Introduction

1. How often have you said, "I am going to church today, this Sunday?"
2. How often have we asked someone if they want to "go to church" with us?
3. The expression "go to church" is one that we constantly hear used and perhaps have used on numerous occasions ourselves.
4. It implies that the church is a building, but in reality, the church is those of us who have turned from our sin, confessed Jesus as our Lord and Savior and put Him on in baptism.
5. Those of us who have been added to God's family are His church.
6. What we typically mean when we say we are going to church is that we are going to the assembly of the saints.
7. Having said all this, I have a question for you this morning.
8. Why do people "go to church?"
 - a. Why do those of you who are in the twilight of your lives and perhaps have difficulty getting around make the effort to gather with the saints every time these doors are opened?
 - b. Why do those of you with small children come and participate in worship, knowing that you may not hear all that is said due to a child who can't be still or quiet?
 - c. Why do you mothers struggle to get your children ready, and come, knowing that you are not supported in your efforts by your husband?
 - d. Why do so many of you sacrifice sleep, rest, time and energy each week to attend worship?
9. God's Word gives us several reasons for "going to church."

10. This morning, in the time we have together, I would like to share those reasons with you and perhaps give you a greater appreciation for what you have done this morning and what you do each week, several times a week.

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We “Go To Church” . . .

A. TO GLORIFY GOD

1. Our goal as Christians is to glorify God in all that we say and do (1 Corinthians 10:31).

“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31, NASB95)

2. This is especially true when we assemble together.

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3. In Psalm 29, the psalmist David wrote,

“Ascribe to the Lord, O sons of the mighty,
Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due to His name;
Worship the Lord in holy array.”

(Psalm 29:1–2, NASB95)

4. It was the apostle Paul who at the end of a prayer he prayed on behalf of the Ephesians wrote these words:

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“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”
(Ephesians 3:20–21, NASB95)

5. While these words are not limited to our gathering together as the assembled church, giving glory to God “in the church” certainly includes what we are doing as we gather here this morning.

Slide 5**B. TO REMEMBER AND PROCLAIM OUR SALVATION**

1. Every Lord's Day (Sunday) we gather not only to remember God's saving activity in our lives through Jesus Christ, but also to declare it to those who assemble with us, who have not yet come to Him for their salvation.
2. We do this especially through the memorial meal which we call "the Lord's Supper."
3. In his first letter to those Christians in Corinth, the apostle Paul speaks twice of this memorial meal (1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-26).

"Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread." (1 Corinthians 10:16-17, NASB95)

"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." (1 Corinthians 11:23-26, NASB95)

4. It is in the Lord's Supper that we remember His death, burial and resurrection which made possible our salvation.

Slide 6**C. FOR GOD'S FORGIVENESS**

1. Sin is a very real problem in this world in which we live.
2. It is the result of choices which we make either . . .
 - a. To say or do something which He has prohibited, or
 - b. To neglect doing something which He has commanded us to do.

3. Either one is a violation of the righteousness of God.
4. In our worship assembly, we come humbly seeking relief from the burden of sin's guilt.
5. It is here with our brothers and sisters in Christ that we find comfort in pouring out our hearts in penitent prayer.
6. It was David of old who pleaded with God to "create within me a clean heart" and "restore to me the joy of Your [God's] salvation" (Psalm 51:10,12).
7. And it was David, who in Psalm 86, prayed,

"Be gracious to me, O Lord,
 For to You I cry all day long.
 Make glad the soul of Your servant
 For to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
 For You, Lord are good, and ready to forgive,
 And abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You."
 (Psalm 86:3-5, NASB95)

8. The apostle John promised, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 (1 John 1:9, NASB95).

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D. FOR STRENGTH TO OVERCOME OUR WEAKNESSES

1. Every day our world is becoming more complicated.
2. We struggle with . . .
 - a. Moral issues which we never thought we would face.
 - b. Financial losses as the result of identity theft.
 - c. Serious illnesses which force us to make major changes in our lives.
 - d. The painful loss of those close to us.
 - e. The physical and mental limitations of growing older.
3. Sometimes we fail and disappoint ourselves and others.

4. It is during these times that we need the spiritual strength which comes from assembling with others to worship our God.
5. Oftentimes, we find the reading of God’s Word within the assembly especially helpful (cf. Psalm 23; 27:1, 13-14; 56:3-4)

“The Lord is my light and my salvation;

Whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the defense of my life;

Whom shall I dread?”

(Psalm 27:1, NASB95)

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“I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the
goodness of the Lord

In the land of the living.

Wait for the Lord;

Be strong and let your heart take courage;

Yes, wait for the Lord.”

(Psalm 27:13–14, NASB95)

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“When I am afraid,

I will put my trust in You.

In God, whose word I praise,

In God I have put my trust;

I shall not be afraid.

What can mere man do to me?”

(Psalm 56:3–4, NASB95)

6. When you are weak and discouraged, when you face decisions which you do not know how to make, seek God’s presence with us — come to pray, sing, listen and receive strength.
7. Then, you may find yourself leaving worship with the words of the apostle Paul on your lips — “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me”

(Philippians 4:13).

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E. FOR INSTRUCTION

1. It is when we assemble together as the Lord’s church for worship that the great principles of God are taught (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:1).

“Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more.” (1 Thessalonians 4:1, NASB95)

2. Because, as the apostle John wrote, “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19), we face constant pressures contrary to God’s purposes — we need spiritual guidance.
3. Long ago the prophet Isaiah spoke to the people of his day concerning how the Lord would instruct them (Isaiah 28:10).

“For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.” (Isaiah 28:10, ESV)

4. Little by little we take God’s meaningful truths into our hearts.
5. Our instruction in His truth is not finished in an hour of worship, or in a month, or a year.
6. It is throughout our lifetime, learning each principle little by little, we find ourselves finally grasping God’s way for us to live.

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F. FOR ENCOURAGEMENT TO LIVE RIGHT

1. Most of us *know* what is right, but we often find ourselves failing to *do* what is right.
2. We “go to church” to be encouraged to do what we know is right.
3. At times our encouragement may involve our being reminded, admonished or exhorted in living faithfully before our heavenly Father.

4. It is easy when we have learned something to let it slip away.
5. Gathering together to sing the great hymns of faith reminds us.
6. When we hear God’s Word set forth and explained, great principles once again become alive.
7. Many of us at one time or another have set around a fire on a cool evening.
 - a. As long as each ember remains in the fire, it continues to burn brightly.
 - b. However, when it is removed from the fire and placed by itself, it begins to burn out.
 - ❑ In the same way, we as Christians need to worship together regularly in order to keep our own spiritual fire burning.
8. The writer of the letter to the Hebrew Christians knew the importance of being encouraged by one another.

“Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” (Hebrews 3:12–13, NASB95)

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G. FOR CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

1. It was God, who long ago, before creating the first woman, said, “It is not good for the man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18).
2. What He said about that first man is true for all of us — we need companions, both like-minded friends and loved ones.
3. It is in the church that we find such people.
4. As we saw in our reading this morning, those early disciples in Jerusalem “were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42, NASB95).
5. Luke had two favorite expressions which he used to describe the early Christians — they were often “together” (Acts 2:44, 46) or “with one accord” (Acts 4:24; 5:12).

6. One of our hymns expresses this so well:

"Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.

The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above."

7. Our fellowship here, as God's church, should be one which says, "We love you, and we will hold on to you."
8. To see an entire family worshiping together is a precious sight.
9. Parents, when your children see that worship is meaningful to you and not just something to mark off your calendar, it will become meaningful to them.

Conclusion

1. This morning we have looked at several reasons as to why we "go to church."
2. But the real question which each of us must ask ourselves this morning is "Why do I go to church?"
3. What is your purpose for being here?
4. Before our worship of God can be truly meaningful, we must become a Christian — we must be born again.
 - a. We must have a faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.
 - b. There must be true sorrow for the sin in our lives.
 - c. We must not only confess Him everyday as our Lord, but obey Him in having our sins washed away through our baptism into His name (Acts 2:38).
5. Today, will you give your life to Jesus Christ in obedient faith and know the rich life and meaningful worship He intends for you?