

## BACK TO CHURCH – September 2022

Christian, it's time to get back to church! Yes, I know life is busy right now and there are many demands on your family, and there just isn't enough time for church. It all makes perfect sense, and I completely understand. But still, we are Christians and faithful church attendance should be number one priority for us and our families. Here are a few reasons why:

### 1) You have been commanded to gather together with other Christians.

*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. (Hebrews 10:25)*

As Christians we believe that Jesus is Lord and He has authority over our lives. Therefore, we always strive to obey His teachings. (Luke 6:46)

### 2) Our gathering together is a defining mark of our faith in Christ.

The very first Christians “devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer...*Every day* they continued to meet together (Acts 2:42-47)

Throughout the book of Acts and Church History, Christians met together frequently. At the very least, once a week, and sometimes every day. It was the pagans who worshipped their idols alone in their homes at their own convenience.

### 3) We will never mature in our faith apart from the local church.

It's easy to think that our personal times of prayer and bible study are sufficient for our growth as a Christian. And now with the internet, we don't even need to leave our home to hear a good sermon and “catch a service”. But this is an illusion. We may gain some knowledge, but we will never mature in faith and love when we are alone. In Ephesians 4:11-13, Paul describes the means of maturity:

*[Christ] gave...some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

Faith is not simply our *knowledge* of Christ, but our *confidence* in Christ. And “faith comes by hearing.” Therefore, we need someone else to speak and remind us of Christ's love. This only happens when we gather with a community of believers and attend to His Word together.

### 4) You will be led astray apart from the regular gatherings of your local church.

Paul continues in his letter to the Ephesians:

*Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Ephesians 4:14-16)*

We live in a world of lies. Each false message is like a wave of the ocean tossing us about. A person alone on a raft is easily swamped by a single whitecap. But when he climbs back aboard the battleship, he, along with the rest of the crew, will find safe passage even through a hurricane. So it is with the local church. Alone, we are doomed...but together with our church family, we can persevere in the truth and find protection from the relentless pressures and temptations of the world.

Finally, Christian, please don't forget that you are still a part of the family of God. Your local church needs you, not just your money and talents, but *you!* For if indeed you are a Christian, then the Spirit of Christ is in you and, therefore, be assured that you will be a blessing. So, for your own soul's sake and for the good of God's people, Christian, please make this a priority and get back to church!