

# Why should I go to Church?

"I don't need to go to church to be close to God."

"Why, I feel closer to God on a mountain top than in a church."

"Besides, Jesus died for me.<sup>1</sup> Why do I need to go to church? It's just Jesus and me."

It's not really an issue of where you feel closer to God. It's not an issue of feelings at all. It's a matter of what God's Word says. After all, it's only through God's Word, and the preaching and reading of God's Word that we even know about Jesus and the possibility of salvation. What does God's Word say?

## God's Word indicates we are to meet together

Hebrews 10:24-25 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 **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.

It's important to note that this instruction was given in spite of the persecution the Christians were under at the time.

## The early Church met regularly

Acts 2:42 They were continually **devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.**

Acts 4:32 And the **congregation of those who believed** were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them.

Acts 11:26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And for an entire year **they met with the church** and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

Acts 15:3 Therefore, being sent on their way **by the church**, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren.

Acts 15:4 When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were **received by the church** and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.

Acts 16:40 After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, **they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers** and encouraged them. Then they left.

Acts 20:7 **On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread**, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.

Romans 16:5 Greet also **the church that meets at their house.**

1Corinthians 11:20 Therefore **when you meet together**, ...

1Corinthians 16:2 **On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save**, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.

1Corinthians 11:33-34 33 So, dear brothers and sisters, **when you gather for the Lord's Supper**, wait for each other. 34 If you are really hungry, eat at home so you won't bring judgment upon yourselves when you meet together.

1Corinthians 16:19 The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does **the church that meets at their house.**

Philemon 1:2 to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to **the church that meets in your home:**

The more you examine the New Testament, the more you find that meeting regularly is what Christians did.

## The Church is the Bride of Christ

2Corinthians 11:2 I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

Ephesians 5:25-27 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as **Christ also loved the church** and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might **present her to Himself a glorious church**, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Revelation 19:7-9 7 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and **His bride has made herself ready.**" 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."

Would you be comfortable telling Jesus you love him, but that you don't love his wife? Would you be comfortable telling Jesus you love him, but that you don't want to be his bride?

## The Church is the Body of Christ

Ephesians 1:22-23 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for **the church**, 23 **which is his body**, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Ephesians 4:12-13 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, **to the building up of the body of Christ**; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of **the body, the church**; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

1Corinthians 10:16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a **participation in the blood of Christ**? And is not the bread that we break a **participation in the body of Christ**?

This is how we participate in the body and blood of Christ. See also 1Corinthians 12:12-26 —We are all part of the body.

## The Church is the assembly of God's people

If you're not part of the assembly, you're not part of His Church.

Matthew 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build **my church**, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

1Corinthians 11:18,20-22,33-34 18 In the first place, I hear that **when you come together as a church**,... 20 **When you come together**,...22 ... **Or do you despise the church of God** and humiliate those who have nothing? ...33 So then, my brothers, **when you come together** to eat, wait for each other. 34 If

anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment. And when I come I will give further directions.

Ephesians 2:19-22 19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and **members of God's household**, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with **Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone**. 21 In him the **whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord**. 22 And in him you too are **being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit**.

1Timothy 3:14-15 14 Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, 15 if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in **God's household, which is the church of the living God**, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

## The Church Is God's household

Ephesians 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and **members of God's household**,

1Timothy 3:15 if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the **household of God**, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth.

## How can you take your problems to the Church if you don't belong to the Church?

If we have a problem with a Christian brother or sister, Jesus told us to take it before the Church.

Matthew 18:17 If he refuses to listen to them, **tell it to the church**; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

1Corinthians 6:1-4 1 If any of you has a dispute with another, **dare he take it before the ungodly** for judgment **instead of before the saints**? 2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? 3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! 4 Therefore, **if you have disputes** about such matters, **appoint as judges even men of little account in the church!**

<sup>1</sup> Jesus did not die for you! He died for us! He died for His Church! Romans 6:8; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25

The phrase "one another" is used 57 times in the New Testament in reference to the Church:

be kind to, pray for, care for, love, etc. How can you do this if you're not part of the Church?

#### How can you receive instruction if you're not part of the Church?

Acts 11:26 and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

1Thes.5:12-13 12 Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. 13 Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

1Timothy 3:14 ... 14 I am writing you these instructions so that, 15 ...you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

#### How can you share with the Church if you're not a part of the Church?

Acts 14:27 When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

Acts 4:32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

Romans 12:13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Romans 15:27 They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.

2Corinthians 1:7 And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

Galatians 6:6 Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

#### How can you be available to serve if you're not part of the Church?

Galatians 5:13 You, my brothers, were called

to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

1Timothy 15:22 Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men...

1Peter 4:8-10 8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

#### How can you honor and submit to your spiritual leaders?

1Thessalonians 5:12-13 12 Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. 13 Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

1Timothy 5:17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Hebrews 13:7 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

1Peter 5:2-3 2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

#### How can the Church remember Jesus, as He commanded, if the Church does not meet?

Luke 22:19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 20:7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.

1Corinthians 10:16-17 16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

1Corinthians 11:23-26 ...23 [Jesus,] on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 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." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

If people do not see the need to belong to the Church, how can the Church perform any function?

How can the Church pray without meeting to discuss needs? How can the Church offer spiritual support? How can the Church offer financial support to those in need? How can the Church offer moral support to those seeking a place to belong?

Jas.5:14 Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. How can the church be effective in the world if it does not meet?

It's a selfish attitude that says, "I can be a Christian and not go to Church." It says, "I don't want to be a part of the body of Christ." Jesus wants you to be a part of His Church. If you're not active with His Church, you're not a part of His Church.

A person who asks the question "Why should I go to Church," or makes the statement that "I don't have to go to Church" is either ignorant of God's Word, or is ignoring God's Word. Christ's Church is essential to God's plan.

The entire New Testament is about Jesus coming to Earth to set up and redeem His Church.

Matthew 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

The Gospels relate His ministry and His suffering for His Church; the book of Acts tells about the establishment of His Church; The letters are all written for the edification (instruction) of His Church; and The Revelation describes the future glorification of His Church.

#### Jesus died for the Church!

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Ephesians 5:25 ...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ...

Our salvation, our future, is with the Church of God! How can anyone who considers himself a Christian not be a part? No, Jesus did not say, "You must go to Church." However, the statement makes no sense from Jesus' perspective. You can't "go to church." If you're one of His, you ARE the church! If you love Him and want to please Him, you'll meet with the other members of His Church and remember Him with His Church whenever you can. You will do the work of His Church. You will be a member of His body, you will be a member of His bride, the Church.