

GOING TO CHURCH

Acts 20:7-12; Hebrews 10:25

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: One of the greatest blessings a Christian can enjoy is regularly attending worship services with other Christians. It is really a command that Christians meet together regularly. Christians get together in a worship service to express praise and devotion to God the Father and to Jesus Christ as well as to exhort and encourage the others and all this brings encouragement to each Christian. There are a lot of different kind of "worship" services today so just what is involved that would help one get the most out of "going to church?"

I. ACTIVITIES IN CHURCH SERVICES

1. There is Prayer:

- There are several examples of prayer in the early Church - Acts 4:23-24; 12:5, 12
- Prayers have different value depending upon the righteousness of the one praying - James 5:16
- Prayer has a value in a worship service - Philippians 4:6-7
 - Prayer blesses, praises God.
 - Prayer blesses those who pray.
- To benefit the most from public prayer, one should try to make them his/her own.
 - As someone is praying, tell the Lord that you agree with what is being said by the one leading in prayer - if you agree with that person's prayer.
 - Don't be shy about saying "amen" if you agree with the one praying.

2. There is Singing:

- Commands to sing are found in Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 13:15
- There are certain things to emphasize when singing:
 - Praising God.
 - Teaching one another.
 - Making melody in one's heart.
- The emphasis is not on how the music sounds, but on what is being said and how one feels during the singing.
 - Pay more attention to the words than the music/melody.
 - Concentrate on uniting the mind and heart with the words, not just singing with the mouth.
- To get more out of singing in public, sing in private - James 5:13

3. There is Preaching of the Word of God:

- Teaching/preaching of the Word of God started with the early Church - Acts 20:7
- It is by the Word of God that Christians can grow spiritually - 1 Peter 2:2
- How one listens to the preaching of God's Word indicates the depth of devotion one has to God.
 - One should be quick to hear what God's Word has to say - James 1:18-19
 - One must have a proper attitude of meekness and willingness to receive God's Word -
 - James 1:21; Mark 4:23-25
- As one often sings in private, so should one study God's Word in private as well, and then there will be more to benefit from in the preaching during a public worship service.

4. There is the Lord's Supper:

- Other names some have for the Lord's Supper:
 - The "breaking of bread" - Acts 2:42; 20:7
 - "Communion" - 1 Corinthians 10:16

- It is a memorial instituted by Jesus Himself - 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
 - In the Lord's Supper things should be remembered:
 - The sinless body of Jesus offered on the cross in the Christian's place.
 - The blood Jesus shed to provide forgiveness for one's sins.
 - When done faithfully, one proclaims his/her faith in the satisfaction of Jesus' death.
- Participating in the Lord's Supper should be done with all seriousness and appropriateness - 1 Corinthians 11:27-29
 - It should be done in a manner worthy of the One being remembered - Jesus.
 - It is a time also to reflect/remember one's relationship with the One who died for him/her.
- It should be done properly.
 - It honors Jesus (done in remembrance of Him).
 - It renews one to greater faithfulness - 1 Corinthians 11:28-32
 - It strengthens one's unity in the body of Jesus Christ - 1 Corinthians 10:17
 - One shares in the "body and blood of the Lord Jesus" - 1 Corinthians 10:16
 - Not literally of course
 - Isaiah 53, Psalm 22 and the Gospel accounts of Jesus' suffering and death can help one be more prepared to partake of the Lord's Supper and help focus on what one is doing.

5. There is the collection (offering):

- The early Church was known for its love for one another - Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35
- Their love extended beyond those of the local congregation - Acts 11:27-30
- A systematic manner of giving developed after a while for needy Christians - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2
- The main reason in the early Church for the collection was to provide for needy Christians.
 - Christians locally and those far away.
 - Also collection was taken for those preaching the Gospel - 2 Corinthians 11:8, 9; Philippians 4:10-18
- How much should a person give? The Old Testament spoke of a tithe or a tenth however in the New Testament giving is according to certain thoughts:
 - As one may prosper - 1 Corinthians 16:2
 - Whatever is given with a "willing" mind" - 2 Corinthians 8:12
 - According to what one has - 2 Corinthians 8:12-13
 - As one plans in his/her heart - 2 Corinthians 9:7
 - Whatever one can give and still be happy about it - 2 Corinthians 9:7
 - To keep in mind Jesus' teaching about "sowing and reaping" - 2 Corinthians 9:6-8
- Giving (collection) fulfills one of the purposes of a worship service (going to Church)
 - One is blessed in giving - Acts 20:35; 2 Corinthians 9:11
 - The needs of others are met - 2 Corinthians 9:12
 - God is glorified - 2 Corinthians 9:12-15
- The Churches in Macedonia are examples of giving - 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

II. HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF GOING TO CHURCH

1. Keep in mind who is there.

- Brothers and sisters in Christ are there.
 - People just like each other (YOU) who appreciate the presence and encouragement of others.
 - Each person should take time to visit before and after Church services.
 - Don't be one of those who drops in at the last minute.

- Don't be in a rush to leave when the service is over.
 - Frequent visitors are there.
 - They have formed opinions about the congregation during their visits.
 - What have they decided about the Church membership in the services?
 - Are the members really disciples of Jesus? - John 13:35
 - Have they actually sensed that God is truly with the members?
1 Corinthians 14:25
 - Take time to welcome the visitors and spend some moments visiting with them and get to know them and they get to know you - Hebrews 13:2
 - The Lord Jesus is there.
 - Jesus promised to be wherever some of His people are - Matthew 18:20
 - How many, in a worship service, really act as if Jesus were really there?
2. A truthful saying is "You get out of it what you put into it" and it applies to a worship service.
- Preparing before a worship service makes a big difference.
 - Praying and meditating on what one is going to do.
 - Planning on what one can do to make the meeting more worshipful (welcoming, visiting)
 - One attends a worship service to serve, not to be served, but blessings can follow.
 - The more one attends, the more interest one shows, the faster and more one will grow.
 - When one asks "how often do I need to attend?" is a sure sign of spiritual immaturity.
 - It shows a lack of true love for Jesus and the Church members.
 - It shows selfishness in a person.

CONCLUSION:

1. Neglecting attending Church (worship services) is bad for one's spiritual growth.
2. Do YOU express your love for God and your fellow Church members as YOU should?
3. One of the greatest spiritual blessings one can enjoy is the fellowship one shares with his/her brothers and sisters in Christ in attending Church - going to worship services.
4. Why do YOU attend worship services?