

## DO I HAVE TO GO TO CHURCH?

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### WORSHIP ATTENDANCE DOWN

Christian stewardship involves prioritizing time for regular worship attendance. How often do Americans attend religious services other than weddings and funerals? Pew Research Center for the People and the Press reports the following statistics:

- \* Once a week or more - 40%
- \* Seldom never - 24%
- \* Few times per year - 19%
- \* Once or twice a month - 17%

In declining congregations the majority of regular attenders in the 40 percentile are 45 and over. It seems some younger members have adopted the stance: "I don't have to go to church to be a Christian." Many of them claim to be Christians. They pray. They claim the Christian traits of repentance, saving faith in Christ and the intention to amend their lives. Then why don't they round out their life-style by regularly attending worship services?

### WORSHIP ATTENDANCE STUMBLING BLOCKS

#### Stumble-bum # 1 - "I'm very busy."

There are those not opposed to attending worship services. However, a busy life-style robs their available time. It's work time/school time five days a week and Saturdays loaded with household/family responsibilities. Add to this the social/recreational activities and there seems to be little time for worship time.

#### SOLUTION

Prioritize! Manage time to make time! The Third Commandment (Exodus 20:8-11 & Deut. 5:12-15) demands it. Skipping worship without a legitimate reason is a sin to be confessed and removed. Get rid of the bad business of too much "busy-ness" by removing some non-essentials. "Seek FIRST His kingdom and His righteousness!" (Matt. 6:33a) If you are too busy to go to Church you are too busy.

#### Stumble-you # 2 - "Church is boring."

Some find the rote of ritual unappealing. Others complain about "sleepy" sermons and that the choir, music and congregational singing have shortcomings.



#### SOLUTION

Don't go to worship expecting perfection! A negative attitude only begets more negativity. Go to church with a positive attitude believing you'll be blessed in some way, and you will be. A worship service is not mere entertainment. It involves not only "getting" but also "giving". During worship we not only receive God's Word, Sacraments and Absolution, we also give of ourselves by worshiping God, witnessing to others, reaching out in love, sharing each other in fellowship and presenting our tithes and offerings. Make worship exciting by going to church with a positive attitude to receive God's blessings and give of yourself.

#### WHY GO TO CHURCH?

**God loves you in Christ & you love Him!**

**Our heavenly Father loves worship!**

**Jesus is present in Holy Communion!**

**The Holy Spirit empowers with His Word!**

**Pastor comforts with holy Absolution!**

**The power of prayer is present!**

**We audibly share our faith in word and song!**

**Christians surround us to love and be loved!**

**Opportunity is given to offer our time, treasure and talents!**

#### WORDS TO REMEMBER

"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another." (Heb. 10:25)

"Where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them." (Matt. 18:20)

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." (Exodus 20:8)

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

**You! . . . share this message with someone!**