

Why Church?

No matter where we go in the world, there are church buildings; some are large and some are small, some fancy and some are, shall we say, quite humble. Some are old and some are new, some are visible to the passersby while others are hidden because they are not permitted. But these are only structures; they are not a church because, according to the Bible, a church is a living organism - a body of believers. The word "church" comes from the Greek word *ekklesia* (ecclesia) which means, "a calling out, i.e. a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation." When we talk about "believers," we are talking specifically about those who have repented of sin and, by faith alone in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, have trusted Him as personal Saviour. "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." {Acts 2:47} That and that alone is what constitutes a Christian, and a true church is comprised of Christians; these very same people who have trusted Jesus Christ as Saviour. What we normally call a church is merely a building where the church meets; it is a church house or, as others may call it, the House of God, but God is only there when the church, the local assembly, meets. The body of the Christian is the temple of God, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the **Spirit of God dwelleth in you?**" {emphasis added} {1 Corinthians 3:16} Just because a person is a member of a local assembly, or attends one, does not make him a Christian any more than going into a garage makes him a vehicle. The **ONLY** way a person becomes a Christian is, as mentioned already, is when he repents of sin and by faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ, receives Him as Saviour, and that based on His having paid our sin debt with His shed blood, and death, on the Cross of Calvary. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; **But with the precious blood of Christ** (emphasis added), as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:" {1 Peter 1:18-19} This same Jesus, though having died physically and was buried, bodily rose three days later and ascended to Heaven where He sits on the right hand of God the Father. "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." {Romans 8:24b} "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;" {Hebrews 10:11-12}

Not every person who is a true Christian is at the same spiritual level as others for many different reasons. Spiritually speaking, some people grow faster than others just as, in the physical realm, some people grow physically faster than others. Physically, some people grow to a certain point and then grow no more; they are done growing. However, for Christians, we are never done growing spiritually; that will happen when the Lord calls us home to Heaven. For now, though, if we are not growing spiritually, there is a serious problem that needs to be corrected. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe." {Hebrews 5:12-13}

Many people, Christians included, often wonder, "Why Church?" "Why is it necessary to attend church?" Many have been heard to say that they can worship God while fishing, hunting, camping, attending a ballgame, visiting family, etc. But that has nothing to do with attending church; those are only excuses. Someone may ask, **"Why church; why does anyone need to go to church?"** A book could be written on this, but I'll be brief and list several reasons.

1. To be where we assemble for worshipping God.
2. Because we need it.
3. To be where the Gospel is preached.
4. To be where we have fellowship with other believers.
5. Because it demonstrates our obedience to God.
6. To be where we are spiritually fed from the Word of God by the pastor.
7. To be where we give our tithes and offerings.
8. To be a testimony to the unsaved.

9. For public worship
10. For mutual edification
11. It helps to prevent apostasy
12. To be where hearts and hands are mutually strengthened
13. Because it helps to foster Christian love
14. It helps in the performance of our Christian duties
15. To be where we comfort one another.
16. To be where we can provoke one another to good works and love.
17. To exhort one another, to exhort ourselves and each other, to warn ourselves and one another of the sin and danger of backsliding, to put ourselves and our fellow-Christians in mind of our duty, of our failures and corruptions, to watch over one another, and be jealous of ourselves and one another with a godly jealousy. This, managed with a true gospel spirit, would be the best and most cordial friendship. -- Matthew Henry
18. The difference between listening to a radio sermon and going to church, someone has said, is almost like the difference between calling your girl on the telephone and spending an evening with her. --D.L. Moody
19. "When ye frequently, and in numbers meet together, the powers of Satan are overthrown, and his mischief is neutralized by your likemindedness in the faith." --Ignatius
20. It's the will of God.
21. **The most important reason of all - God commands it.** "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." {Hebrews 10:25}

For those who know Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, FAITHFULLY attending church is not a choice of life; it is a life of obedience to our Saviour. Read God's Word daily; spend time before the throne of grace in daily prayer. Attend a good fundamental, Bible believing church where you can be spiritually fed from God's Word and thereby grow spiritually strong.

~Richard A. Ciarrocca