

The Necessity of Church

There are many things that are important in this world. There is family. There are sports. There are many places we could take our children. There is work. There is government. There is happiness. But far and above all these things is a six letter word called church.

I say this not because of human decision or preference or convenience, but because of God. God has founded and energizes the church with his holy spirit. Eternal things are found and shared in the church.

Sometimes we stray from the church because it is not what we think it should be. Is any church? It is more about what God thinks it should be. Because it is run by people who are human and sinners, none will be perfect. But it is the best the world can offer to a perfect and eternal God.

The central purpose of the church is to find and know Jesus Christ. Everything else is secondary and flows from that. Coming to know Christ who saves us and transforms us into acceptable and blessed members of society is a lifetime experience. If we know Christ as Lord and God, we grow and learn all of our lives.

“Anyone who is to find Christ,” writes Martin Luther, “must first find the church. How could anyone know where Christ is and what faith is in him unless he knew where his believers are?”

People argue that you can find God just as easily in the woods or on the golf course or in your recliner at home. But this is far from the truth. Perhaps an experience of nature, or a connection with creation can come somewhere else. But worship and the holy spirit at work are only in the church.

There are millions of people who go to church, and many more who don't who have a partial experience of faith. They go because it's the right thing to do. They go so they can make business connections. They go not thinking, not understanding, but don't get that serving and knowing Jesus, is the thing. Like Leo Durocher said, “Baseball is like church. Many attend few understand.”

What we must understand is that the church is not about us, or even for us. It is about God, and for God. We go there to worship God. We go there to learn how to live. We go there to serve others as that grace comes upon us and overflows. Anytime we make it about what we want, we profane it.

“The Church is not an automobile showroom - a place to put ourselves on display so that others can admire our spirituality, capacity, or prosperity. It is more like a service center, where vehicles in need of repair come for maintenance and rehabilitation.”~ Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Worship is really a time where God and we connect. The holy spirit is moving, translating, blessing, lifting all the time in that dynamic. Through the music, prayers, sermon, and other actions of worship we are being opened up to God. And we go kicking and screaming all the way, because we think it's about us.

The world is missing out on the blessing and morality that it used to have because more people do not go to church on a regular basis. There are many choices now for a Sunday morning or a time when God's people gather. Unfortunately, people are taken in by the devil's suggestion that worldly activities, even if they are fun and seem like a good thing for us or the kids, can replace the church.

When kids grow up and do not know Christ, it is too late for us to go back. Maybe they will come to faith as adults. And maybe they never will. But we have lost our chance to offer them the right and best choice.

"I take the kids to church and Sunday school," writes actress Reese Witherspoon. "They love it. I really think it's important for a child to feel that there are things that are bigger than your life out there." As they go, may God's spirit dwell within them.

Others need the direction and authority the church can offer. Each generation goes off on its own. We go through decades of good morality and church attendance. We find decades of self worship and falling away from God.

In all of those times the church is there, her bells pealing and her buildings standing ready to receive the lost and the seeker. At some time or another we realize that the church is the only place we can find a sure direction in a lost and aimless world.

Being a regular worshipper and worker in God's church has great benefit. "I have taken this step[Church] because I want the discipline, the fire and the authority of the Church. I am hopelessly unworthy of it, but I hope to become worthy." ~Edith Sitwell

You can leave out many things in life. But the church should not be one of them.