

Church Attendance, Who Needs It?

(Rev. Dr. John Bartol)

Why attend Church, when you can practice worship on your own? Send today for your “Do-It- Yourself- Worship-Kit,” and forget about future church attendance. Each kit contains:

- A portable seat, shaped like a church pew.
- One small hymnal, containing 12 well known hymns.
- One mouth organ, to take the place of the church organ. (Frankly you’ll find it difficult to play and sing at the same time).
- One very abbreviated New Testament with familiar selections to be read in less than one minute.
- One small offering plate. You can always take your money back later.
- One brief sermon entitled, “What a good boy / girl am I.” You will feel much better after reading this sermon every week.
- You will receive an extra lift from your service if, at the close, you rush to a mirror and shake hands with your self. (Adapted from Christian Herald).

On the contrary, it is when we feel the least desire for worship and prayer that we need them most. Oliver W Holmes, when asked why he attended church regularly responded, “I have in my heart a little plant called devotion, which I discovered needs watering at least once a week.”

I call our attention to a young boy on a deserted, frozen pond. He could be considered a hockey player because he had the basic equipment – skates and hockey stick, as he shot the puck toward an imaginary goal. But, after 10 minutes of solitary practice he lost interest and gave up. The next week his father took him into town where he became a true hockey player by joining a team with other players and a coach. And that made all the difference.

Surely, we can see how this same principle applies to the church. If a professing Christian does not associate with a local body of believers, he/she is cutting themselves from sources God has provided to help them grow through mutual worship, prayer, Bible study, fellowship and service.

The Christian is like the single coal that fades when taken from the fire and glows again when returned to the other coals. God does not want us to be spiritual orphans but rather to be part of His family, through the church, the body of Christ in the world.

The Bible makes it clear that salvation is by grace through faith and not through church membership or attendance. But any idea of enjoying one’s salvation in isolation from a local body of believers is contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

The church as we know it today, is far from perfect. At best the church is a fellowship of sinners – forgiven and hopefully being changed into the likeness of Christ, but still sinners. Henry A Porter, once said, “Long ago I decided I wanted to invest my little life – time, talent and treasure in something that would stand long after I’m gone. And the only entity of which I’m sure is the church.” Would you want to live in a community where there was no church? Then support yours!

“Jesus went into the synagogue on the seventh day, as his custom was”
(Luke 4:16).