

Sermon for FBC May 06th, 2018

I believe in God but I do not think the church is important

Good morning!

Today my message is “I believe in God but I do not think the church is important.” When God gave this to me, I did not think about how this title would stir people up.

While working on this, I received input from several people and I want to give the credit for some of these thoughts I am sharing today to Ian and Gary, who did a lot of research which they shared with me.

God’s reason for this topic initially was to reach out to those who have quit church attendance for any reason. This statement has been used by a lot of people over the last twenty years who no longer come to church. They truly believe in God but have lost the desire or direction to attend local fellowship in a church in Dawson Creek.

Since we started praying for Dawson Creek and all the people in this area, God has put those who are missing all the benefits of fellowship on my mind and heart. You might have noticed our sign outside that clearly states that “you are” missing from church.

Why don’t people go to church anymore? Why are they going out for breakfast instead? Why are they playing sports? Why are they sleeping in? Why isn’t church the priority it used to be? ¹

In 2013, Group Ministries did research by going out on Sunday mornings to see and ask, “Why people were not at church”. Here are four main reasons given:

1. “I feel judged.” (have you ever formed negative opinions about people who came to your church?)
2. “I don’t want to be lectured.” (people want to build relationships, want to communicate with each other)
3. “Church people are a bunch of hypocrites.” (do we preach perfection and live tarnished? Are we “real” at church?)
4. “Your God is irrelevant to my life. But I’d like to know there is a God and He cares for me.” (In a place where no one’s allowed to ask questions, share doubts, engage in dialogue, or be completely honest, relevance simply can’t exist.) ²

These are some of the reasons I have heard from people right here in Dawson Creek. They also have told me that “they are too busy, church is boring, church is too old fashioned, church people are too gossipy.”

Now let us look at reasons why we should consider being regular attenders at church.

5 Spiritual Dangers of Skipping Church
by Nathan Rose

1. You will miss out on God's primary design for your spiritual growth and well-being.
2. You disobey God. Corporate worship is not optional for the Christian, according to the Bible.

Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV makes this clear:

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the day approaching."

3. You make a statement to the world that God is not worthy of worship.
4. You can't minister to anyone.
5. You skip out on a foretaste of heaven. God created us to worship him. That's the primary reason you exist. This is why the church was redeemed and this is what God's people will do when Jesus returns and restores our fallen world.

Revelation 22:3 NIV gives a picture of this: *"No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him."*³

5 Reasons to Attend Church Regularly

By Rick McDaniel

1: IT IS WHAT JESUS DID

Luke 20:1a NIV says, *"One day as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courts and preaching the Gospel..."*

2: IT IS A GOOD HABIT "Some people have gotten out of the habit of meeting for worship. But we must not do that. We should keep on encouraging each other, especially since you know that the day of the Lord's coming is getting closer." Good habits bless your life and produce positive results. When you practice the good habit of regular church attendance you reap from that some very good results.

3: IT IS A POSITIVE EXAMPLE

4: IT IS IMPORTANT FOR FELLOWSHIP

5: IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR GROWTH⁴

Ian shared this thought:

*"CHURCH is people, not a building. The Christian life was never meant to be lived solo, God has gifted each member of his church to serve one another, you can't do that solo. It is near impossible to live a Christian life alone, it runs counter to everything God has done for us."*⁵

Ephesians 2:19-22 NIV

19 *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,*

20 *built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.*

21 *In Jesus the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.*

22 *And in Jesus you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.*

One of the most counter-cultural things you can do is become an engaged member of a faithful local church.

In our flighty and noncommittal age, neither non-Christians nor Christians are naturally inclined to find a place to put down roots and make longstanding, objective commitments for the good of others. We want to keep our options open and, above all, preserve our own freedom of choice, rather than make a covenant for the long haul and embrace a framework for real life in all its ups and downs.

But what if you went against the grain and became part of the solution to the modern problem of being so noncommittal? What if you joined the rebellion, and pledged your loyalty and engagement to a Bible-believing, gospel-cherishing local church? ⁶

When a person trusts Jesus Christ for salvation, he or she is made a member of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). For a church body to function properly, all of its “body parts” need to be present and working (1 Corinthians 12:14–20). It’s not enough to just attend a church; we should be involved in some type of ministry to others, using the spiritual gifts God has given us (Ephesians 4:11–13). A believer will never reach full spiritual maturity without having that outlet for his gifts, and we all need the assistance and encouragement of other believers (1 Corinthians 12:21–26).

For these reasons and more, church attendance, participation, and fellowship should be regular aspects of a believer's life. Weekly church attendance is in no sense “required” for believers, but someone who belongs to Christ should have a desire to worship God, receive His Word, and fellowship with other believers. ⁷

This is posted on the entrance to this church – do you agree with what it says?

You may wonder “Who we are and what is this church all about?”

We are a group of ordinary people who are on an amazing journey together following Christ. Our guide is the Bible because it is the divinely inspired word of God, and it will never take us in a wrong direction.

First Baptist Church is one of the “churches in your neighborhood” and we would love for you to attend. Getting to know you is a big deal to us. You will find people who are welcoming. We know that the road is rough sometimes. We will work really hard to bring you practical and relevant messages to encourage you through life’s ups and downs.

Here is a place where you can grow into God’s plan for your life.

At our church we don’t think we are better than any other church out there, we’re just doing our best to become our best. If you are looking for the perfect church we’re not it. At our church we will make mistakes, but we will choose to grow from them.

So, here’s the invitation: “You’re Invited” to check us out and jump in at your own pace and to experience the life that awaits you in Christ.

We want to give a message to those who state, “I believe in God but I do not think the church is important”.

God thinks you are important and He wants you to be a part of His church, so you can grow and minister with and for Him. Come join us as we experience God in this place!

¹Thom and Joani Schultz, pgs. 23-27

²Thom and Joani Schultz, pgs. 23-27

³Nathan Rose

⁴Rick McDaniel

⁵Ian Munro (His quote, May 5, 2018)

⁶David Mathias, Why Join a Church?

⁷www.GotQuestions.org

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