

Is It Okay for Christians to Skip Church?

It is amazing how times have shifted over the years and going to church on Sunday has fallen off the priority list. A recent Barna study revealed that the average person attends church 1.6 times per month; but surprisingly that 1.6 number is trending up. However, it means people still miss more Sundays than they attend. While I guess it's good that number is moving upward, there is still cause for concern.

With people absent from church at this rate, is it okay for Christians to skip church? And beyond that, what are we missing? As you ponder that question, let me give you a reminder of why we go (or are supposed to go) to church.

Why Should Christians Go to Church?

Here is a passage that defines why Christians should not skip church.

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need" ([Acts 2:42-45](#)).

Based on this passage, there are four primary reasons we should go to church regularly.

1. Discipleship

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching..."

One big reason we go to church is for instruction, which is part of discipleship. The purpose of preaching and teaching is to exhort, encourage, and correct so that we learn how to apply Biblical truth in our lives every day. Granted, not all discipleship happens on a Sunday morning, but if done properly, these moments can be a catalyst to inspire your walk with the Lord throughout the week.

2. Fellowship

"...and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread..."

Part of the reason for gathering was to spend time with each other. Sharing food and spending time together were key elements to building the community of the church. That remains true today. If you look at any church that is thriving, chances are food, fellowship, and discipleship are a part of that community.

3. Worship

"...and to prayer..."

One of the significant aspects of church is when the body of Christ gathers for corporate worship and corporate prayer. Some of the best moments in church happen when we all come together seeking God in prayer and entering his presence in worship. Doing this as one body invites the presence of the Lord, and often things can happen in your heart and life that may not happen when you pray on your own.

4. Stewardship

"...All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need..."

Another aspect of going to church is not just what you get out of it, but also what you give to it. God saved you and placed in you gifts, talents, and abilities that can benefit the body of Christ. Part of the reason you are there is to use those gifts to serve others. Stewardship is offering your time, talent, and treasure in service to build up the body of Christ.

Building relationships, receiving instruction, worshipping together, spending time with other believers, giving of your resources, and finding encouragement in your walk should all be at the top of our list of reasons we go to church.

Is It Okay for Christians to Skip Church?

The answer to this question lies in the reason(s) why you are skipping church. There are some valid ones and there are some questionable ones. Let's look at both and see if any of these resonate with you.

Valid Reasons for Christians to Skip Church

Sickness or Disability
Work
Vacation
Transportation

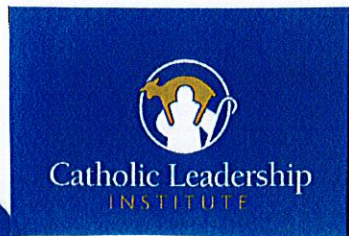
Questionable Reasons for Christians to Skip Church

Fatigue
Busyness
Desire or Enthusiasm
Other Priorities

<http://www.biblestudytools.com>



IGNITING
OUR PARISHES



EMBOLDENING
OUR CLERGY



FORGING
OUR FUTURE

Faith

A gift of grace that propels us to know, believe, and act

- Serving out of love for Christ
- Prayer
- Sharing the faith
- Being a living example of the Gospel
- Living the faith
- Trusting in God's plan
- Giving the Lord thanks and praise
- Study of sacred scripture to enhance faith

Hope

Reliance on God

- Perseverance in faith
- Witnessing to God in all situations
- Consistent in prayer life
- Complete and total trust in God
- Openness to the movement of the Spirit
- Moving forward into God's plan

Charity

Generosity, mutual love among Christians and outreach to all in need, giving time, talent, and treasure of oneself for the benefit of others

- Works of mercy
- Advocacy for justice
- Prayer for those who may persecute us
- Support groups for various people
- Sharing of our time out of compassion for others
- Listening
- Ecumenical respect for all Christians
- A selfless, unconditional & sacrificial love
- A strong sense of community in our parishes and in the Diocese