

Attendance

Is it really important to attend worship services? Can't I just stay home and worship God by myself? In this lesson, we will look at what the Bible has to say about attending worship services and how important or unimportant it is.

What is the purpose of worship services?

Matthew 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” How can we say we are truly putting God first when we don't even bother to attend services? Clearly, this does not mean if you are sick, you must be at services, but our life should prioritize God. God actually wants us to be at worship service so it must be important to be there.

Matthew 18:20 “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Think about this for a moment. When Christians gather to worship God, they are given the opportunity to be in His presence. Why would a Christian choose to willingly miss that? All of eternity for the faithful will be in Heaven in the presence of God. So, if we don't have time for God now, why would we expect to be with Him in eternity?

Acts 20:7 “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.” Sunday is the first day of the week, and this was when the early Christians gathered to both worship God and partake of the Lord's Supper on a regular basis. Biblical examples are given to us so that we will know what the early Christians did to be obedient to God, and what He expects from us as well today.

Philippians 3:12-14 “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also, I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” When Christians willingly miss worship services, can we really say we are pressing toward the mark?

2 Timothy 2:15 “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” Attending worship services helps a Christian to study and grow stronger. God expects us to do both of these things. Clearly, being with other faithful Christians helps strengthen and encourage God's children.

Hebrews 10:25 “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.” It helps us to be stronger Christians when we attend services, and we can find comfort in being around other people that also want to properly worship God.

2 Peter 3:18 “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” Christians are expected to grow. At worship services, a Christian gets the added benefit of learning and growing with other Christians. Yes, a

Christian needs to study on their own as well. However, when gathered with fellow Christians, there is strength and support that is also very important for a Christian to have in their lives.

Why are Christians required to attend worship services?

Matthew 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” If a Christian willingly misses worship services, are they really letting their light shine? Are Christians showing what their real priorities are when they choose to skip worship services? What lesson does our example teach to others?

John 14:15 “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” If we love Jesus, we would be at worship services if we are able because He has commanded it in the New Testament and we should want to be there. Our absence at worship services shows we do not love Him.

James 2:18 “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.” Being at worship services shows our faith in God and that He is important in our lives. It also strengthens and encourages other Christians when we attend worship services, which is also very important.

1 Peter 2:2-3 “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” Being at worship services helps Christians to grow and become stronger and more knowledgeable about God and His Word.

2 Peter 1:5-11 “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Being at worship services helps a Christian grow stronger and to better understand what areas they need more growth in. All Christians have different strengths and weakness and, together, they are stronger than when they are alone. Christians cannot learn from and strengthen each other if they do not find being at worship service as very important. Together, a stronger Christian can help a weaker one in their time of need.

2 Peter 2:20-22 “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” Being at worship services helps a Christian to guard against falling away from Christ. Not attending worship services a Christian can attend certainly starts the process of falling away, and makes it easier to keep missing worship services.

When a Christian can attend worship services but chooses not to....

A. You show a disregard for the scriptures

Acts 20:7 “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.” If we don’t assemble on the first day of the week to worship God and partake of the Lord’s supper, we are not following Biblical examples given to us and are, therefore, disregarding God’s command. Will God be pleased with disobedience?

Hebrews 10:25 “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.” We can more easily put God first in our lives when we make it a priority to go to worship services, and we can also make time for the things that are important to us. If we don’t go when we can, that means it is not that important to us.

B. You have a sinful attitude

1 Peter 2:2 “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” It is indeed a poor attitude for a Christian to not be at worship service if they can, showing to the world that something else is more important than their desire for growing in their knowledge of God’s Word

2 Peter 3:18 “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” It shows a poor attitude for a Christian to decide they can skip worship service, inferring that they don’t need to grow. We all need to grow!

C. You lack respect for the elders

Acts 20:28 “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” If a congregation has elders, they have the Biblical authority to watch over the flock. Part of taking care of a flock is setting aside time to feed it. If a Christian chooses to not attend worship service, they show a lack of respect for God’s design for the church leadership, as well as, the elders themselves. As long as the eldership is sound, God expects Christians to follow them, not disrespect them. Missing a worship service a Christian can attend is also disrespectful to God. How many people do you think God will allow into Heaven that do not repent of such disrespect?

Hebrews 13:7, 17 “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.” and “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” A sound eldership is looking out for, and trying to protect, the congregation. Is a Christian that chooses to not attend worship service really submitting to the eldership and obeying them as God expects faithful Christian to?

D. You need to repent

James 4:17 “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” A Christian knows they need to be present at worship service every time they can. To willfully skip worship service is to not do good willfully, or to sin.

Revelation 3:14-16 “And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” A Christian that only comes to worship service when they want to is lukewarm. Christ will not accept lukewarm Christians.

Conclusion

In this lesson, we have noted that when a Christian is able to attend worship services they need to be there. We also should remember that not wanting to go to worship services is a real heart or priority problem that we need to change, if that describes us. If you miss a worship service and you are not sick, ask yourself what is the real reason you did not go, and if you believe God will accept that?