

Why Do I Need To Go To Church?

Message 02 in the series "Why?"

A. We need to always be ready to give answers for our faith.

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..." 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

B. Answers to five common objections to getting involved in church.

1. Objection: "I hate religious hypocrisy."

Answer: Jesus hates religious hypocrisy too!

"What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity. Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness." Matthew 23:27-28 (NLT)

Life Application: We must authentically live out our faith.

"Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world... Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone..." 1 Peter 2:12 (NLT), 16-17 (NIV)

Life Application: We must hold each other accountable.

"Let the godly strike me! It will be a kindness! If they correct me, it is soothing medicine. Don't let me refuse it." Psalm 141:5 (NLT)

2. Objection: "I don't want to feel judged."

Answer: Jesus doesn't want us to judge others, either.

"Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged." Matthew 7:1-2 (NLT)

Life Application: We must not show favoritism.

"My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others? For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes. If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, "You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor"—well, doesn't this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?" James 2:1-4 (NLT)

Life Application: We must intentionally reach out to people who are far from God.

Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way. When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today." Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled. Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!" Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost." Luke 19:1-10 (NLT)

3. Objection: "I've been hurt/disappointed by people in church."

Answer: The church is made up of redeemed sinners adopted into God's family at all levels of spiritual maturity.

"God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure." Ephesians 1:5 (NLT)

“Dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you I couldn’t talk to you as I would to spiritual people. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in Christ. I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren’t ready for anything stronger. And you still aren’t ready, for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn’t that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren’t you living like people of the world?”

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 NLT

Life Application: We must forgive people who offend us.

“You must make allowance for each other’s faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.” Colossians 3:13 (NLT)

Life Application: We must help each other grow up spiritually.

“Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Then we will no longer be immature like children.” Ephesians 4:11-14 (NLT)

4. Objection: “I don’t see any benefit in joining a church.”

Answer: Being a part of the church gives our lives purpose.

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20 (NLT)

Answer: Being a part of the church gives us support, encouragement and protection.

“Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:1-2 (NLT)

5. Objection: “I don’t have time!”

Answer: Following Jesus will always reshape our priorities.

“A man prepared a great feast and sent out many invitations. When the banquet was ready, he sent his servant to tell the guests, ‘Come, the banquet is ready.’ But they all began making excuses. One said, ‘I have just bought a field and must inspect it. Please excuse me.’ Another said, ‘I have just bought five pairs of oxen, and I want to try them out. Please excuse me.’ Another said, ‘I now have a wife, so I can’t come.’” Luke 14:16-20 (NLT)

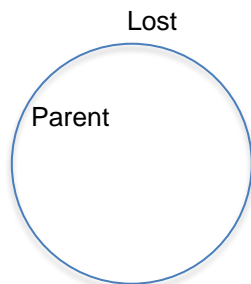
Life Application: We must give Jesus first place in our lives.

“If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.” Luke 9:23-24 (NLT)

John Schmidt • 08-13-17 • john@centeringlives.com

Connect Group Questions

1. What does the word “church” mean to you? What is your earliest memory of church?
2. Why do many people in our culture have a positive view of Jesus but a negative view of church? How can we change negative perceptions about church in our sphere of influence?
3. Read Galatians 6:1 & Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. Then discuss how the members of your connect group can help each other.
4. Discuss the following reasons for not being active in church:
 - “Someone in church offended me.”
 - “The church is full of hypocrites!”
 - “I don’t want to feel judged.”
 - “I don’t have time.”



Discuss this diagram which illustrates the different levels of spiritual maturity in our church **family**.

Some people are **lost** (unbelievers).

Some are **infants** (new Christians who don't know how to walk or feed themselves and need lots of care.)

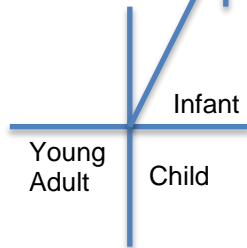
Some are **children** (know a little but are mostly concerned with themselves).

Some are **young adults** (want an opportunity to be involved in ministry).

Some are **spiritual parents** (want to reproduce their faith in others). Where are you?

How would you respond to these statements?

5.



Source: **Real Life Discipleship**. By Jim Putman, NavPress, 2010

6. Discuss the following quotation:

“Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than going to a garage makes you an automobile.” Billy Sunday