

The Deception of Devaluing Church Attendance

written by Randy Starkey | 03/07/2015

As a pastor I have noticed over the last 5 years especially what I call “the deception of devaluing church attendance”. It’s a prophetic sign written long ago in the Scriptures. One you don’t want to be part of fulfilling! We read in Hebrews 10:25 (NLT) — And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

So, we see here the Bible tells us some people WILL neglect gathering together as the church, and the prophetic context is that this will happen more in society as we draw closer to Christ’s return, and, that this is the most dangerous time for it to happen! Don’t let it happen to you! It’s like the proverbial frog in the boiling water. It happens slowly, and before you realize it you are “cooked”! As we read the rest of chapter 10 it is full of warning. God loves us, but if we don’t take such passages seriously, we can end up in big trouble. Israel tended to never listen to her prophets until they were in a big mess. Don’t let that be you!

So, why is church so important anyway, that God speaks of it like this.

It all has to do with spiritual life. Church is part of our spiritual life source and it cannot be replaced with anything else. We have a personal (not private) relationship with Jesus, yes, but that’s not enough! We need the church. It’s God design and plan for us as a source of His life and victory! It’s the one thing Jesus is building. This world system will fall apart, and only God’s church is going to stand. Matthew 16:18b (NLT) — ...I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. It’s God’s only safe place.

So what we do is fall into the idolatry and deception of the world system. We put sports, rest, leisure, hobbies, you-name-it above God and church. Just as Israel would worship Baal and other pagan gods, we have our own modern version of that, and the spiritual results are just as tragic. It takes awhile for us to see that sometimes, but like the frog, all of sudden – bam! We’re in trouble. Don’t wait until you get there! Connect with God and church now! Pull into the gas station now. Get your oil changed now before you blow an engine!

I know some churches make church boring. I understand. But God’s alive. He has good churches everywhere! (Not perfect this side of Heaven, so get over that.) Quit complaining and find a good one!

Sometimes people also operate out of fear and hurt. And because of that they are afraid of connecting with people. They let anxiety, dysfunction, depression, discouragement and every other emotional ailment known to man keep them from coming and connecting. the result of that? They only get worse. A

good church will love you. Find one like that and step out and get healed! See Hebrews 12.12-15.

Back to the spiritual life aspect of church. All the illustrations of church in the Bible illustrate this. Our need to be together. Consider...

A Body – can any member of a body survive if it's not connected to the rest of the body? Can life flow? Can blood flow? No. what happens to a body member cut off from the body. It dies.

An Army – can you defeat the enemy alone? Are you Rambo? No. it takes the church as an army marching arm in arm and in rank to defeat our enemy!

A Sheepfold – Sheep travel in flocks. What happens to stray sheep? They get eaten! Enough said.

A Building (*Ephesians 2*) – Can a building be built if the stones are not in the wall and touching each other? No. Neither can you be part of God's building if you try to hang out there as a loose stone. You will just get "kicked" around!

To change the illustration a bit, Jesus said in Mt. 24 "as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the coming of the Son of man." What was Noah doing? He was BUILDING, just like Jesus is BUILDING. Noah was building the ark, Jesus is building His church. Now, what saved Noah when the rain (judgment) came? The ARK! Not some personal life preserver!! The ark was MOST NEEDED when the rains came. Similarly the Church will be MOST NEEDED as we approach the Lord's return and the judgment of the earth. Don't miss this! Church is powerful! Be ready! Get connected! Stay connected!

These things I'm writing are all true. I pray you will act on them for you and your family, and not allow the "Deception of Declining Church Attendance" to cook you like the frog!

Lots of Pastor love,

-Ps. Randy