

Why Christians Go To Church

Text : **Heb. 10: 11-27**

S#1.

A. Church attendance is down worldwide.

S#2.

1. Though government sponsored the Church of England has voiced fears of extension.
2. 18% decline in the U.S. since 2000.
3. Churches of Christ are not exempt from this precipitous slide.

B. Gallup polling statics have been proven to be wrong.

S#3.

1. Gallup poll said **40%** attend, but the poll questions skewed the results.
2. Olson did a study that showed only **17.7 %** of Americans will attend any Sunday.
 - a. His study followed over 200,000 “Christians” for more than 20 years.
 - b. 78 million self-described protestants attend LESS than 12 time per year.
 - c. Of those who claim to be attendees 23 to 25% averaging 3 out of 8 Sundays.
3. It is projected that self-described Christians will be in the minority by 2050.

S#4.

C. Studies show that people today choose a church based upon personal valued.

1. People choose a church much like choosing a social club.
2. They look for the entertainment a church provides.
 - a. Music
 - b. Activities
3. The aesthetics
 - a. The beauty of the building (catacombs of Rome ?)
 - b. The pageantry of the services
4. How convenient is it ?
 - a. The location of the building and the parking.
 - b. The schedule of services (*Article about offering schedule options*)
5. Ever fewer choose a church based upon doctrines, practices and spirituality.

D. Even in the Lord’s church, attendance is an increasing problem.

S#5.

1. An article by Bobby Ross published by the Christian Chronicle on line in 2009
 - a. lost **526** congregations in the last 6 years (2003 thru 2009)
 - b. lost **78,436** adherents in the same period
 - c. All this while the American population increased **36.3%**.

2. According to 21st Century Christian who publishes the directory the rate of decline continues to steepen.
 - a. From 2003 to 2012 we are down **6.2%** (1,656,717 to 1,554,579 = 102,138 loss)
 - b. There were also **708** few congregations.

B. We must cry out the alarm, identify the problems, and seek solutions. S#6.

1. We simply must plug the leaks.
2. We know the slide starts with absence from the assembly.
3. The Christian who places other things above the assembly has begun drifting. S#7.
Heb. 2: 1 – **For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.**
4. Those who love the Lord look forward to times of worship.
Psa. 122: 1 – **I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.”**

Why should we be glad when they say, “*Let us go to the house of the Lord.*”

I. God wants His people to assemble together before Him. S#8.

A. Our unchanging God has always wanted to have direct contact with His people.

1. **Gen. 3: 8** ... God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the evening.
2. **Rev. 22: 1-5** ... In Heaven the curse will be removed and we'll see Him face to face.

B. In Old Testament times God required large and small assemblies. S#9.

1. There was to be an assembly every Sabbath day.
 - a. **Lev. 23: 1-3** **The LORD spoke again to Moses, saying, ² “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘The LORD’s appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations—My appointed times are these: S#10.**
³ **‘For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work; it is a sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings.**
 - b. **Miqra : 1** convocation, convoking, reading, a calling together. (Strongs)
2. In addition to the Sabbath, they assembled for three very large feasts. **Vs. 4 f** S#11.
 - a. They had the Passover which lasted a week.
 - b. They assembled for Pentecost. (the feast of weeks)
 - c. The Feast of Tabernacles (or booths)
3. Today many would consider these feasts a burden.
 - a. They required travel to Jerusalem.

- b. They took a week or more.
- c. They involved financial expenditures.

C. A holy convocation is also required in the New Testament.

S#12.

1. **Heb. 10: 23-25** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; ²⁴ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking **#13.**
our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day ...
2. Like the convocations of the Old Testament, the Christian assembly is a command.
 - a. It is not optional.
 - b. To miss the assembly is a transgression against God.

S#14.

II. The New Testament church met frequently, but at least Sunday was required.

A. The brethren in the bible spent a lot of time together.

S#15.

1. **Acts 2: 42** – They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
2. **Acts 2: 46** – Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having ...
3. Above this, there was a special assembly on first day of every week, on Sunday.

S#16.

B. Jesus personally met with the brethren on the first day of the week.

S#17.

1. Jesus arose on Sunday morning.
John 20: 1 – Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb
2. Jesus met with the brethren on that Sunday. (*First day of the week*)
John 20: 19-21 So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, **S#18.**
and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ And when He had said this, He **S#19.**
showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

3. From then until now brethren have assembled to meet with Jesus on Sunday.

* It is worthy of note that the very first time Jesus met with His followers **S#20.**
after the resurrection that He sent them forth to seek and to save the lost.
(Compare ... **John 17:18** to **Luke 19:10** to **John 9:4**)

C. Ever since brethren have met for communion every first day of week. S#21.

1. **Acts 20: 7** – On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight. S#22.

- a. This text endorses Sunday evening services.
- b. It gives the just consequences for sleeping during the sermon. ☺

2. Their assembly occurred every Sunday.

I Cor. 16: 2 – On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. S#23.

3. As was the Sabbath, Sunday is the property of the Lord.

Rev. 1: 10 – I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, S#24.

4. The weekly convocation was for an announced and a specific purpose. S#25.

I Cor. 11: 20 – Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper.

D. The weekly convocation is mandatory for all Christians. S#26.

1. **Heb. 10: 23-25** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; ²⁴ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking ^{#27.} our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day ...

2. It is part of “*holding fast*” and of “*not wavering*.”

3. It provides a place to fulfill the command to motivate and to encourage one another.

* Conversely ... *Empty pews are very discouraging.* S#28.

III. Our holy convocations brings us into God's presence in a special way. S#29.

A. The omnipresent God makes a special presence in His temple.

1. **II Chron. 7: 1-2** Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house. ² The priests could not enter into the house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house. S#30.

- a. God is everywhere all of the time.
- b. He required His people to come from all over to meet Him at His temple.

2. As their God and their King God required Israel to assemble where He assigned.

- a. Compliance required faith and a submissive heart

- b. It required that His followers commit time.
 - c. Assembling in Jerusalem entailed considerable expense.
3. As the sovereign ruler of the universe
- a. God has the authority to require us to assemble ... to form a holy convocation.
 - b. He could have chosen any day and any place.
 - c. As the tabernacle was assembled wherever Israel was located, so His temple today.

B. Today ... Christians are the temple of God.

S#31.

1. **I Cor. 3: 16–17** Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷ If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.
2. **I Pet. 2: 4–5** And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected **S#32.** by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
3. **Eph. 2: 19–22** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are **S#33.** fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, **S#34.** being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.
4. We are to function as a priesthood to offer sacrifices in the temple ... church. **S#35.**
I Pet. 2: 9 – But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
 - a. As sanctified priests we enter into the holy place.
 - b. The curtain is down between the holy and most holy place.

C. When the church assembles it forms the temple in which God dwells.

S#36.

1. **I Cor. 11: 18** – For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it.
2. When stones are missing from the temple, it diminishes the temple.
 - a. The temple in Jerusalem was the most expensive building ever built.
 - b. Each stone of today's temple is more expensive than all in Solomon's temple.
3. Missing stones are a reproach on the temple of God ... **absence reflects on God.**

S#37.

D. We all have our time of daily worship ... but the weekly convocation is special.

IV. Why don't more people attend the weekly assembly ... holy convocation. S#38.**A. Unbelievers don't visit. S#39.**

1. Unbelievers have no responsibility to attend ... they are lost. (*no hope, w/o God*)
2. Many don't come because they have not been asked.
3. Some have an unfavorable view of the church. (*judgmental / hypocrites*)

B. Why are so many believers irregular in attendance ? S#40.

1. Some have a legalistic and non-biblical view of church.
2. They love other things more than they love God.

* **a. We do what we really want to do ... fulfill our desires.**

b. Satan is an aggressive competitor. Often uses family to draw us away.

Matt. 10: 37-39 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy S#41. of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸ And he who does not take his cross and S#42. follow after Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁹ He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

C. When considering worship, motivation is everything. We must change hearts. 43.

1. **John 4: 24** – God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

2. A worshipper must have the heart of David. S#44.

Psa. 122: 1 – I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."

CONCLUSION :**A. Therefore, faith and love for God are the keys to stabilizing our attendance. S#45.**

1. When our relationship with God is what it should be, we will want to be here.
2. Thus, when we had rather be with someone else or doing something else we have a problem with our relationship with God ... with our faith.

B. If we want unbeliever to join in our holy convocation, we must create faith. S#46.**INVITATION :**

S#47.

Let each one of us examine ourselves when and why do I forsake the assembly ?

S#48.

Do not take forsaking the assembly lightly. It IS a matter of eternal consequence.

Lesson Text :**Hebrews 10: 11-27**

11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; **12** but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, **13** waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. **14** For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. **15** And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, **16** “This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, And on their mind I will write them,” He then says, **17** “And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” **18** Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin.

19 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, **21** and since we *have* a great priest over the house of God, **22** let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. **23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; **24** and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, **25** not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, **27** but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.