

What We Come To Church To Do - Pray

July 1, 2018

What We Come To Church To Do:

1. **Pray Together** - *to seek, commune with and experience God without distraction*

Ephesians 2:21-22 ESV

21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

- *Prayer is much more than just what we do. Prayer is who and what we are.*
- *The Church, the assembly of the believers, is focused exclusively upon God. We gather to seek Him and to draw nigh to Him. We gather to hear His voice and experience His presence. We are passionate about knowing Him and seeking a greater intimacy with Him.*

1 Peter 2:5 ESV

5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

- *As lively stones placed in God's living temple by His Spirit, we practice and demonstrate our identity by bringing to Him through prayer our spiritual sacrifices, lives that are wholly and absolutely surrendered to Him.*

Romans 12:1 ESV

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Matthew 26:39 ESV

39 And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

Revelation 2:2-5 ESV

2 I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.

3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary.

4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

We are in danger of our lampstand being removed by Jesus when:

- *What we “do” as Christians becomes more important than the One we love.*
 - *What we “do” can selfishly feed our sense of accomplishment and spiritual pride.*
 - *Who we know (in prayer) will keep us humble, dependent and grateful servants.*
- *We allow the busyness and business of ministry to drive us instead of our love for Jesus being the motivation and guide for all we do.*
- *We pursue worldly results, apparent success, man’s favor, public image, more than the manifest presence of God.*

“Shepherds, when you ‘feed’ your sheep Jesus, are you nurturing them in their personal relationship with Him? Are the good works at your fellowship, the programs, the services, the outreach, and the like, causing your sheep’s focus to slip away from the person of Jesus Christ?”

—T.A. McMahon, The Berean Call, June 2018

“It is scarcely possible in most places to get anyone to attend a meeting where the only attraction is God. One can only conclude that God’s professed children are bored with Him, for they must be wooed to meeting with a stick of striped candy in the form of religious movies, games and refreshments.”

— A.W. Tozer, Man: The Dwelling Place of God

Matthew 21:12-13 ESV

12 And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

13 He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.”

- *Providing animals for sacrifice and a money exchange for traveling worshippers was good, necessary and easily justified. Should the worshippers stop because they didn’t have and couldn’t obtain what they needed?*
- *Like carnal human nature always does, what is good and necessary replaces God and becomes a means for selfish gratification and self-promotion.*
- *Loving devotion to God is replaced by the business and busyness of worship.*
- *Commerce and business had caused the Temple to cease to be what God intended.*
- *God, and His purpose for the assembly of believers, can so quickly be lost in the busyness of production, technology, programs, activities and ministries.*

Matthew 7:21-23 ESV

21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’

23 And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew’ (*ginōskō* - Jewish idiom for sexual intercourse, experiential knowledge) you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

- *Our God is a jealous God, desiring and requiring a love relationship with each of us. He will not tolerate even what is good to replace Him in our hearts.*
- *No matter how severe and genuine people's needs are, they must never replace or preempt loving God first and foremost.*
- *Many love the good, the morality and the charity of Christianity with no personal relationship with nor love for Jesus.*

Hebrews 2:1 ESV

- 1 Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.
 2 For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution,
 3 how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?

Luke 10:38-42 ESV

- 38 Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house.
 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching.
 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."
 41 But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things,
 42 but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

Psalm 63:1-4 ESV A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

- 1 O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
 2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.
 3 Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.
 4 So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands.

Psalm 122:1 ESV A Song of Ascents (*hinneh - to behold, to see*). Of David.

- 1 I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!"

Psalm 133:1-3 ESV A Song of Ascents (*hinneh - to behold, to see*). Of David.

- 1 Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!
 2 It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes!
 3 It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

Acts 1:14 ESV

- 14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Acts 2:1-2 ESV

1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.

2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

Acts 2:42 NASB

42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 2:42 ESV

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

1 Timothy 2:1 ESV [written A.D. 62-66]

1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people,

2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior,

4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:8-10 ESV

8 I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;

9 likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire,

10 but with what is proper for women who profess godliness--with good works.

Acts 12:5 ESV

5 So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

Acts 12:12 ESV

12 When he [Peter] realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.

Acts 4:23-31 ESV

23 When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

[18 ...charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus."]

24 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said...

31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.