TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Bobby Rader / Opening Prayer by: Daniel Balch
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#480 Blessed Assurance
#745 Humble Yourself

Scripture Reading by: Braylen Butler
#383 Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross

Communion Devotional by: Bobby Rader
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#742 When Upson Life's Billows
Sermon: "An Accepting Fellowship"
Galatians 3:26-29

#907 Hark the Gentle Voice
#851 I'll Fly Away
Closing Prayer by: River Lucy

We will me watching the 3rd season of
The Chosen at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday nights
in the fellowship room.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

July 28, 2024

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

9 Excuses People Make for Not Going to Church

I didn't really know what I wanted to say this week here. I almost left it blank just to see who noticed. But then I stumbled upon this article by Wes McAdams that touches on some things I've been thinking about more directly (read: less passive-aggressively). Think about it. BP

I don't like the phrase, "Going to church." It makes people think "church" is simply an event to attend, rather than who we are every day of the week. That being said, assembling with other Christians for worship—especially on Sundays—is an important part of being a Christian. Despite its importance though, people make lots of excuses for not attending worship services. Nearly all of them are logical. After all, people rarely make illogical excuses. But just because an excuse is logical, does not mean it's valid. Here are nine excuses people make and some responses to those excuses.

1. Sundays are my only days to sleep in. I can appreciate this. Really I can. I know you work hard all week, but consider the fact that Sunday is the "getting up day." Sunday is the day Jesus got up from the grave (**Matt 28:1**). He suffered and died for you and He rose from the dead on Sunday. That's why we gather on Sunday **(Acts 20:7).** Every Sunday is "Resurrection Sunday." Every Sunday is "getting up day," so get up and come worship the risen King of Kings. If Jesus' sacrificial death and subsequent resurrection doesn't motivate you to get up, I don't know what will.

2. I have to work on Sundays. Again, I appreciate this. I know you have to work to support your family. God knows you have to work to support your family (**1 Tim 5:8).** That being said, what are you doing about rearranging your work schedule so you can attend at least one worship service on Sundays? If necessary, are you willing to look for another job which allows you to be at worship on Sundays? When assembling with the saints is your priority, there is almost always a way to make it happen.

3. People judge me. I'm sure there are times when people are genuinely and unfairly judged. I'm sorry about that. Really I am. But usually, this excuse sounds like, "This woman was staring at me and I could tell she was judging me." With all due respect, what's the difference between you judging her for her gaze and the judging you feel like she's doing? Aren't you judging her? Aren't you making assumptions about what she's thinking? Some people are truly and sinfully judgmental. They are wrong when they do that; but are you really free from being judged by avoiding worship services? Aren't there plenty of judgmental people out in the world as well?

4. I don't have the right clothes to wear. Clothes are necessary. I would even encourage you to wear clothes that modestly cover your body parts. I would assume you probably have something that covers your body. But please know, you do not have to wear expensive clothes to worship the Lord (see **1 Tim 2:9**). You don't have to wear a suit and tie or an expensive dress. You can come in whatever you have. I can imagine you won't be the only one there wearing jeans and a t-shirt, if that's all you have to wear. Please don't let this stop you from coming.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Steve Ward is at home and continues with health problems.

Yalonda Jackson, Zannie Stroughter's daughter, has health problems.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Steve Ward, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Donna Wilson, Jo Ella McKewen, Oscar Cantu, Jennifer Stelly, Ken Coleman, Dr. Hugo Thomas, Veronica Valant

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis, Debbie Merritt

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific, Mani Pagidopali in India

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meeting Monday, July 29th at 5:30 p.m.

We are working a new Friends and Family directory. A copy of the old one has been placed on the bulletin board. Please check your name, address, phone number and email to make sure it is correct.

We will be hosting a school giveaway on Saturday Aug. 3rd. More information to come.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Aug. 5th at 8:00 a.m.

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Zach Arthur	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Daniel Balch	
Don Taylor	Danny Balch	
Robert Ward	Walden David	
	Gus Tristan	

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5. I don't need to. Ok, I hear this one all the time. "I don't have to go to worship with other Christians. I can worship anywhere. I can worship out on the lake, in the woods, or sitting in my easy chair." I am not denying that Christians can worship anywhere, but please share with me where God's word says you can live independently of the church and worship individually and not corporately. I would love to see where you're reading that in Scripture. Everything I read in Scripture emphasizes the importance, significance, and necessity of being a part of the body of Christ (see **1 Corinthians 12**; **Romans 12**; **Hebrews 10:24-25;** and pretty much the whole New Testament).

6. I don't get anything out of it. You want to know a secret? There's been plenty of times when I've shown up and heard boring sermons and Bible class lessons. The speaker had obviously not adequately prepared or maybe I just wasn't in the right mind set. But I still didn't regret my attendance. Do you know why? Because it isn't all about me. I don't attend just to "get something out of it." I attend for God. I attend to encourage others. I attend because, for better or worse, that's my family.

7. All the songs they sing are old. Honestly, there are songs I like better than others. I understand some songs touch our hearts and other songs use pretty archaic language. But saying songs are "old" is not really a valid complaint. Christians of all people ought to know, truth is timeless. The Scriptures are thousands of years old, but they are still as relevant as the day they were written. Considering the fact that we are practicing a 2,000 year old religion, songs being a few decades old shouldn't really bother us too much. If you stop and consider the words of the songs, you might find that older hymns tend to express deeper spiritual truths than some newer songs. But again, with all due respect, the worship isn't about you. Not everything has to conform to your preferences. Singing "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (**Eph 5:19**) has absolutely nothing to do with being entertained. It is about praising God and teaching and admonishing one another.

8. People aren't very friendly. I know it! I too have been a visitor and it is frustrating to walk in, worship, and walk out without people taking much notice of you. But then again, I don't really want people making a big fuss and embarrassing me either. So I've come to realize – wherever I go – if I want to make friends, the burden is on me. **Proverbs 18:24** (KJV) says, "*A man that hath friends must show himself friendly."* In other words, I have to be a friend to make a friend. I wish people were friendlier. Really, I do. But you have to realize they feel just as awkward and embarrassed about talking with you as you feel about talking with them. So if you want to make friends, stick your hand out, introduce yourself, and say, "I'm new here and I really want to get to know some people."

9. I have been feeling discouraged lately. When you're feeling blue, it's hard to want to go anywhere. I know that. But what better place to be, when you're feeling discouraged, than in the presence of God and His people? I know it might not always feel like it, but everyone there is struggling with something. Everyone there is struggling with sin, discouragement, apathy, etc. They are hoping to hear an encouraging word from the Lord. They are hoping to get medicine for their weary soul. Who knows, you might just get just what you need and you may even be able to encourage someone else in the process. Worship services are the absolute best place to go when you're feeling down. It will help you to shift your focus from internal to external – on God and others.

The Bottom Line

Christians need to make every effort – not every excuse – to worship with the saints. When you want to be at worship, you can almost always find a way. If you don't want to be at worship, you can almost always find an excuse. Let's make a deal, I will make every effort to encourage you, welcome you, and make you feel comfortable, but you also have to make every effort to be here.