

**Unanswered: Do I Have to Go to Church to Be a Christian?**  
**Pastor Dennis Rouse**  
**April 7-8, 2018**

1,724 people made decisions for Christ at Victory on Easter weekend!

Do I have to go to church to be a Christian?

**U.S. Census Bureau & The Barna Group:**

- 75% of Americans identify with a Christian faith.
- 35% of Christians identify with being born again.
- 16% of Americans frequently attend church (2017 — twice a month).
- 31% of Americans attend church once a month.
- Every year around 2.7 million church members fall into inactivity.
- The U.S. now ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the world, following China and India, in the number of people who are not professing Christians.
- Half of all churches in the U.S. did not add any new members to their ranks in the last 2 years.
- 85% of U.S. churches are either declining or plateauing.
- By 2050 the percentage of U.S. population attending church will be about half of what it was in 1990.

**Reasons People Aren't Attending Church:**

1. The church is not relevant to the world they live in. (Not addressing the social problems the world is interested in)

2. They've had a bad experience in a church. (Offense, moral failure, etc.)
3. They burn out on church. (Over served in a church)
4. They feel guilt or shame for their current lifestyle.
5. They prioritize other things above church. (Work, sports, entertainment)
6. The whole idea of church requires too much work and commitment.
7. The option of online church

### **Hebrews 10:23-25 NIV**

*Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, **NOT GIVING UP MEETING TOGETHER, AS SOME ARE IN THE HABIT OF DOING**, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

### **Why Should I Go to Church?**

1. It's a natural expression of someone who is devoted to Christ.

### **Acts 2:41-47 NLT**

*Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all. All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers **MET TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE** and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. **THEY WORSHIPED TOGETHER AT THE TEMPLE EACH DAY**, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals*

*with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of ALL THE PEOPLE. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.*

2. It creates an opportunity for a new spiritual family.
3. It multiplies the power of your life.

#### **Acts 2:47 NLT**

*...all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.*

4. It provides a platform for spiritual growth and accountability.

#### **Ephesians 4:11-16 NLT**

*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. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.*

5. It's a place to discover and use the gifts God gives us.

#### **Romans 12:4-8 NLT**

*Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you*

*the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.*