

It's Sunday Morning, Why Bother?

by Dr. Edwin Louis Cole

I know men who rush to church every time the doors open, yet I know hundreds of men who avoid attending. Does a man's presence at church really matter?

Why not watch some preacher on television, mail in your tithes, then head out to your favorite hunting blind or settle back to watch a doubleheader on ESPN?

Besides, those who comment on your attendance are just being judgmental, right? It's your own business—right?

In a word—no. I'll tell you why:

1. Your presence at church matters to your family. Come Sunday morning, family members have a “date” with God that when kept, promotes consistency, discipline and unity within the family.

The Bible says to “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6, KJV). There's no better place to start your training than at church every Sunday.

2. Your presence at church matters to your community. Some civic leaders have debated the church's nonprofit status, as if it is taken at the expense of other citizens. They just don't understand how churches help society.

One church I visited last Sunday, with 4,000 members, may have saved the local, state and federal governments millions of dollars while increasing the tax rolls by working with the city's under-served citizens.

It is a man's great privilege to be part of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ through His body, the church.

3. Your presence in church matters to your health. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy," God said to Israel through Moses in Exodus 20:8. That doesn't just mean church attendance. The Sabbath is supposed to be a day of rest.

It's a day of setting aside work to worship. The Sabbath is a day of rejoicing because our decision to rest proclaims that we are not slaves but free men.

Lack of rest creates tension, friction, irritability and touchiness. When those give birth to strife, then the Bible says "every evil work" follows (James 3:16). Resting is crucial to life.

4. Your presence in church matters to God. The Sabbath was important to our Savior. Jesus' earthly parents trained Him in the Scriptures and took Him to the temple. Throughout His life He was often found in synagogues.

The fact that hypocrites populated His Father's house never kept Jesus away.

The priests of His day loved ostentatious displays of "holiness" and were slaves to tradition, emphasizing externals. Out of respect for His Father's house, Jesus paid His temple tax in spite of the local leadership (see Matt. 17:24-27).

Jesus took time on the Sabbath to minister to others. He ministered to the sick and the needy and spoke words of life to those devoted to meaningless rituals.

Out of the Jewish faith, Jesus drew 12 men to Himself and taught them the truths of the new covenant. His new church started within the old.

The disciples gave their lives for truth. It's because of their sacrifice that we have the church today. It is a church called by His Name, and one in which He still gives life

through the indwelling of His Spirit because of the resurrection.

Thousands of people attended the birthing of Jesus' church. Their ministry was not a development of or from a church, but the church came from them.

Ministry determines what a church is, not vice versa. The church serves as the womb from which ministries are birthed. The ministries then define what the church becomes to the culture around it.

Are you a member of a church? Are you in ministry there?

Our choices determine if the sacrifices made by those who came before us will be of effect. God help us if we allow our churches to become the spiritual wastelands that Jesus came to resurrect. You can help complete the mission Christ gave to us by being an active part of your church.