

Why a Local Church Is So Crucial for Your Marriage

Having family time is an important part of enriching and strengthening your marriage. What I mean by family time is being involved in a local church. Now, I know better than anyone that there are healthy churches like the one my family and I attend. My pastor is Lawson Perdue. We are encouraged to read our Scriptures, become what God wants us to be and serve each other and the community.

Why is family time so important? It is important for several reasons, and this topic could be a whole book, but I will keep it brief. First, it keeps both you and your spouse growing spiritually. You know you can say the same thing to your spouse, but when someone else says it, somehow your spouse can hear it. If your pastor is teaching God's Word, there is a shot all of you can grow. As each of you grows spiritually, you can become better spouses.

I think we all would like our spouse to be more spiritual. I mean we all need more kindness, love, patience and grace. So as we both grow, we both have the extra spiritual resources to do marriage and life together.

Second, a healthy church provides you some couple and family friends who have the same values you do. Not everyone in church is in the same place you are, but there are usually some people with whom you have enough in common to grow your marriage and families together.

Third, family time gives you a place where you can serve others. You know as a family, you're a team for helping each other out. As adults, I know sometimes we miss out on serving as being part of the family of God. At home, we might expect this from our children, but are they seeing this in our lives

as we serve the larger family of God?

When my daughter was 6 years old, she heard her pastor and other pastors tell her everybody has a ministry and can serve. She asked to serve, and at that time, the children's department wasn't ready for an eager 6-year-old who wanted to serve. That didn't stop Hadassah so she, with Jubal and the rest of the family, found that someone of any age could help make sandwiches for the special needs department. So because of Hadassah's desire to serve her bigger church family, all of us in the Weiss family served for years.

I say this to make the point that finding a place to service in your local church is easy. So, go and serve and see the benefits in other lives and your own, no matter how old or young you are. In a healthy local church, you are encouraged to find a place to serve and be a blessing to others.

My mother-in-law was a great example of serving the larger family. She had six children of her own, a husband and a house that was always clean. She served her local church her entire life. She served in the nursery, Sunday school office and served other areas, including prayer ministry. She went to heaven recently, and hundreds of people came to pay their respects. At the viewing, as acquaintances walked by the immediate family, again and again they said how they were touched by this woman's life. She was a stay-at-home mom, but she loved her local church.

You see, the church if it's healthy, gives us opportunity to serve others. This is a great way to put a stop to our "It's all about me" American attitude. This allows us to be more selfless in our life and in our marriage.

I am a strong supporter of couples being and staying in a local church. Lisa and I have never left a church without the pastors' and elders' blessing and confirming it was God who was moving us to another church. When Lisa and I moved to

Colorado Springs, I brought a letter from my pastor in Fort Worth that said Lisa and I were leaving one family with a blessing and coming to another family.

Some couples miss this basic ingredient in their marriage and family. I know that there are unhealthy, controlling, showboat churches that are dysfunctional families of God. Don't blame them for not finding a healthy church to grow your marriage and family in.

God is an amazing being. He does, however, allow us to team up with several others to navigate this thing called marriage. Take a few minutes and pray about how you will make God a part of your marriage team. {eo}

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