

Privacy or Community? Latest Church Statistics Will Leave You Stunned

Should our relationship with God be completely private? Or should religious community be the center of our faith?

With some recent Barna Research findings, the understanding of faith and spirituality just may show the state of the church today and what it could signal about its future for younger generations.

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In one study, Barna found:

56% of U.S. Christian adults view their spiritual lives as entirely private. The remainder of Christians (44%) tend to be more open when thinking about sharing their spiritual life and walk with others.

Along with these surprising numbers of Christians who do not share their faith, Barna also discovered that: “Christians who view their lives as entirely private are less likely to say that it is very important to see progress in their spiritual life...”

Not only that, but another Barna study found that how generations engage with church community is also dramatically different with 73% of Boomers being likely to engage with other attendees, whereas only 32% of Gen Z is open to do so.

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Within this same study it was also concluded that those who are part of a small group are 40% more likely to believe that their church "...does a good job at building deep and meaningful community."

So, what should these statistics tell us?

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In a day and age where everything has become more individualistic, and the cultural call for spirituality has become so inward focused, we just may be missing the key point that God created us to be the body of Christ together. Christians are meant not only to do life alongside of each other, but to build one another up, empowering each other to share our testimonies with the world of what God has done in our lives.

While our personal, individual relationship with the Lord must be prioritized, we cannot risk hiding our faith under a bowl (Matt. 5:15). The more inward we become, the less likely we are to speak with others about how God has transformed our lives.

These statistics also show us that not only is community key and important, but there is an entire generation who does not feel welcome to openly share with one another. Perhaps it's from prior church hurt, the years of social media damage and bullying or for a deep yearning for something authentic and meaningful, but we cannot miss out on the opportunity to open our arms to the next generations. Without judgment and pre-conceived bias, it is the job of the church to act as the church, bring new people into the flock and shine our light to the world.

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