

7 Excuses That Legitimately Threaten Revival

Detroit is marked for revival, yet revival is not here. It's delayed. We have a problem.

This is an issue not only for Detroit, but for the nations of the earth. God has planned revival, but we have not.

First, I have to qualify the comments you are reading in this article. The driving force of my mandate is revival and reformation in the church. As a prophetic messenger, a primary focus of my ministry is calling the church into the fire of revival. That fire will only ignite as the church becomes flexible and ready for momentous change. The church must agree with an inconvenient revolution.

Revival Is A Corporate Mission

Church is corporate. Revival is corporate. Ministry is corporate.

The first point we have to understand is that the pursuit of revival requires a corporate strategy. The mission of the entire church requires the participation of the church. Church is defined by the corporate gathering. It's the ministry of many. *Personal desire, personal prayer and personal pursuit does not result in revival*—unless it first spreads to a larger unified group of people.

Acts 2:1—*“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.”*

This is why being together corporately and continually in the church is so important. Satan used God's principle of unity to start building his *church*, the Tower of Babel, and God surprisingly revealed that they would accomplish their

task—unless he attacked their unity and scattered them. Now, Satan is trying to pay God back by attacking the unity of the church and causing people to scatter. He has also been successful. What is maddening is that God's strategy of kingdom advance and revival would also be unstoppable if Christians simply gathered in unity. That's all it takes! *Go to church, minister with passion, embrace corporate mission and go after revival!*

Now, many Christians who are unwilling to battle through personal struggles are now convinced that revival can come without devotion to corporate gathering and unity.

What Threatens Revival

1. Inflexible focuses: We live in a society that is extremely independent, and this results in people locking into their own plans with little regard for the dynamic and demanding development of the church. Revival demands our attention.

Acts 1:4 (NIV)—*"On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.'"*

Their leader, Jesus, invaded their personal space and their personal plans. He demanded flexibility and that they cancel their plans. Their ideas of ministry were challenged by Jesus and the call was to drop them. Jesus needed all of them to go in another direction, to cancel their plans, to respond even though the reason was not at all clear.

Today, when leadership calls on the church to turn on a dime, to respond corporately, they are usually faced with unresponsiveness due to other personal life focuses. This is a threat to revival.

2. Family: When confronted with the call to gather as the church, a very easy excuse is, "I have a family activity to

attend.” Little League games, family fun, movies and other family activities are pulling people out of the corporate mission of revival. It’s often said that we are to put God first, family second and ministry third. I strongly disagree. That model leads to a separation, to division, when God is calling for unity. We don’t compartmentalize God, family and ministry. We involve ourselves with all three at the same time.

There used to be a time when families would be in the church every time the doors were open. That was the model. God, family and ministry all happening together, all the time. The revival fueled 24/7 church is coming, and we have to discover now how to implement this model in our families. We’ll be together most every day of the week. This is how it started, this is how it must be again. In fact, if you are intent on prioritizing these three focuses, check out Jesus’ viewpoint in the second passage below! If anything, God and ministry come before family.

Acts 2:42-47—“They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers. Fear came to every soul. And many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common. They sold their property and goods and distributed them to all, according to their need. And continuing daily with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

Luke 14:25-33—“Large crowds went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple. For who among you, intending to build a tower, does

not sit down first and count the cost to see whether he has resources to complete it? Otherwise, perhaps, after he has laid the foundation and is not able to complete it, all who see it will begin to mock him, saying, "This man began to build and was not able to complete it." Or what king, going to wage war against another king, does not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Otherwise, while the other is yet at a distance, he sends a delegation and requests conditions of peace. So likewise, any of you who does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.'" "

3. Time and energy: American culture has won. Or at least it is winning by a huge margin. Revival and the church has lost. Cares of life have nearly destroyed any hope of people having the time and energy to fulfill their call as revival soldiers in the church. The culture of society is driving the church schedule. Churches have waived the white flag of surrender by cancelling and shortening services. This is absolutely tragic. The church's warriors have willingly gone AWOL due to wrongly prioritized daily focuses. A worn out church body now uses the church for something it was not designed to do—be their servant. They are tired and they use the church to recharge. Only when we take dominion over our schedules, turn off the TV, shut down time and energy thieves and refocus on the main thing will we have the capacity to personally charge up so we can serve the church mission. Check out this powerful warning:

Luke 21:34-36—*"Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts become burdened by excessiveness and drunkenness and anxieties of life, and that Day comes on you unexpectedly. For as a snare it will come on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Therefore watch always and pray that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will happen and to stand before the Son of Man."*

4. Church conflicts: It's better to unify around an imperfect church vision than it is to divide and argue about what is the

perfect vision. It's common to pull back from our devotion to the mission of the church when we don't fully embrace their strategies. We want it to be done our way, and if it's not, then we presume we have the option to lessen our commitment. That results in a weakened and threatened mission. In order for revival to come, we must understand this is an 'all hands on deck' level mission. Revival needs us. The church needs us. Revival is waiting. We can't use the church for personal gain, we must serve the church to ensure there is corporate gain and full blown revival. *The church struggles because those who are called to serve it are making demands on it to serve them.*

5. I'll wait and see: People who adopt this strategy are deeply loved by God, but will most likely miss the full thrust of the impact of the revival and outpouring. The issue is not one of love and acceptance, but rather of function. If we presume that God is going to do the work of revival, our perspective is flawed from the beginning. Our follow through will then also be compromised. Revival is dependent on our determination to initiate it. We aren't waiting for God, he's waiting on us. We aren't waiting for revival, revival is waiting for us. We are called to minister, to serve. Revival is calibration to Kingdom life, and that life is marked by Believers doing the work. We heal the sick. We preach the Gospel. Not only do we initiate revival but we also facilitate it. We work and serve God as opposed to expecting ourselves to be served.

Deuteronomy 23:21—"When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you must not be slow to pay it, for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and it would be a sin to you."

Psalms 119:60—"I made haste, and I did not delay to keep Your commandments."

6. I don't fit in: If we understand the definition of ministry, we'll find there is always a place for us. To minister is to serve. Simply serve and you will find

acceptance! The church needs you! Revival needs you! You fit in revival and you fit in the church!

When I was 15 I got my first real job. I was a busboy in a tiny country restaurant. I'll never forget my first day. It was awful! For those of you who know me you'll be shocked to know that I was tragically shy and not outgoing whatsoever. There were a few other workers there the day I started my job and I found myself just standing all alone presuming rejection from my new coworkers. One of them looked at me and said, "Hey, you don't have to stand over there by yourself. Come on over here."

There are two takeaways from this story. First, I was disqualified relationally by myself, not by the restaurant. In fact, the restaurant welcomed me! Not only was I welcomed, I was hired! I wasn't rejected, I was accepted! Second, and more importantly, I wasn't there to develop relationships! I was there to clean dirty dishes off of tables so others could enjoy their stay. I was there to serve. So, the excuse that I didn't fit in simply didn't have any bearing on my responsibility. There was a job to do, people to serve and a mission to fulfill. The same is true in the church. Never let this excuse cause you to stop serving. The cause of revival needs us to serve with passion.

If Jesus' goal was to avoid rejection in the midst of his mission then he would have never made it to the cross, and you and I would be destined for Hell.

Psalm 118:22—"The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."

Matthew 8:34—"The whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart out of their region."

John 1:11—"He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him."

7. I don't want to: This is the most honest excuse. However it's rooted in unbelief and a misunderstanding of the importance of the mission. If we truly believed that revival was the biblical norm for all of us, we'd give everything, every moment in the pursuit of it. An apathetic church is putting the mission of revival at great risk. It's time to awaken to the call of God for the fire of revival to ignite in our nation.

Ezekiel 22:30—*"I sought for a man among them who would build up the hedge and stand in the gap before Me for the land so that I would not destroy it, but I found no one."*

Haggai 1:4-11 (ESV)—*"Is it time for you yourselves to live in paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of Hosts: Consider your ways. You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages earns wages to put them into a bag with holes. Thus says the Lord of Hosts: Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain and bring wood and rebuild the house, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified, says the Lord. You looked for much, and it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? says the Lord of Hosts. Because of My house that lies in ruins while each of you runs to his own house. Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its crops. I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on men, on livestock, and on all the labor of your hands."*

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