**WHY SHOULD I ATTEND Church?**

Good morning, everyone!

I will continue on a short message series of “Why Should I Attend Church?” and will finish it today.

Let’s read a key verse together!

**Matthew 18:20 (Power point)**

**20 For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them."**

Let’s pray!

So we’ve been looking at 8 reasons why God loves to see us come to church and we finished the first 6. Let’s review those 6 points first.

**1) It Tells People What We Value (Power point)**

We said last week we spend our time, money, and energy on the things we love and value. Isn’t that right? So if we are coming to church on Sundays, it tells others that we value going to the House of God.

**2) God Meets Us In A Very Special Way (Power point)**

There are dynamics when the people of God gather together in His house. He surely meets us in a very special way as we get together!

**3) People Are Important (Power point)**

Remember, people who come to church for a Sunday morning service are important!!

**4) God Will Show Forth His Power (Power point)**

God wants to do miracles in people’s lives as we gather together. We desire strongly to see God move in our midst to heal and restore people’s lives by his might power in this place. And I truly believe as people see God’s mighty miracles, signs, and wonders, their hearts will be open to Him and they will know that God we serve is the only true living God!!

**5) It Is A Statement To God and To Others That He Is First**

 **(Power point)**

When we give our first day of the week to honor God, we are believing that God will help us be more productive during the week.

**6) We Come To Worship, Learn, And To Be Taught The Word Of God**

 **(Power point)**

Remember we talked about by coming to church, we will get our spiritual gas tanks filled up so that we can go out and do God’s will? In this place we gather to worship our wonderful Lord, Jesus, to learn and to be taught His wonderful Word.

**So today we will look at the last 2 points:**

**7) God Has Called Us To Be A Community Of Believers**

 **(Power point)**

**Acts 2:42 The Believers Form a Community (Power point)**

**42 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.**

* Peter preached the very first sermon of the New Testament church.
* In his sermon, he called his listeners to repent, to be baptized and to receive the Holy Spirit.
* All who responded were then added to the local body of believers, and they were called the church.
* Everyone who is saved, baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit today should also become part of a local church. A local community of believers.
* **Why?** Because we were not made to live the Christian life alone.
* We were not meant to follow God by ourselves.
* If you read the book of Acts, you will discover that the early church did nearly everything in community.
* They didn't just meet together once a week; they shared life together.
* They shared with one another,
* Encouraged one another
* and met each other’s needs.
* Many met every day!!
* Just as God determines our parents and other family members, I believe God has also chosen the spiritual family that He wants each of us to be a part of.
* The church is God's instrument for advancing his kingdom.
* He has NO plan B.
* The church is the only legitimate setting for living the Christian life of faith.
* No long term "lone Ranger" can be a true disciple of Christ.
* All who truly desire to follow Christ must find their place in a church family.
* Those who don’t will become weaker and weaker in their faith
* And they will face struggles that God never intended them to have to face.
* Eventually, if they don’t come to church and be involved in church, their faith will die.

**2 Peter 2:20 (Power point)**

 **20 And when people escape from the wickedness of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and then get tangled up and enslaved by sin again, they are worse off than before.**

* If we stop coming to church to be with our spiritual family,
* there is a danger that we would be tangled up and enslaved by sin again.
* And this verse says that we would be worse off than before.
* That’s scary, isn’t it?

**Matthew 5:13 (Power point)**

**13 "You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.**

* When we come to church, we keep our lives fresh.
* Our lives will produce a good flavor that others will want.
* We keep our spirits fresh so that we can flavor others with something good.

**Example of Charcoal:** If I had a pile of charcoal and set it on fire I could warm this whole room.

* But what if I took a piece of that charcoal out of the pile, what would happen to that piece?
* That piece of charcoal would go out pretty fast, wouldn’t it?
* It would lose its power to bring warmth to this room right?
* It is the same with our lives.
* When we come together as a church, we will burn brighter and warmer and will give off a warmth that others will want to come and warm themselves by.
* But when we stop coming to church, or only come a little,
* the fire that was put in us by gathering together will little by little begin to cool off and provide no warmth for ourselves or for others.

The last point: We go to church because…

**8) God Has Called Us To Build Together (Power point)**

**We always say “We are better together!!”**

**Ephesians 2:20 (Power point)**

 **20 Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself.**

* Together we are building God’s church here in Japan, here in Izu-shi and this whole region!!!
* We want Jesus to be the cornerstone of all that we are doing!!

**Conerstone in a building**

* Every well-built structure with a firm foundation has a cornerstone.
* A cornerstone is a valued piece.
* They choose just the right rock to place in the corner of the foundation.
* The cornerstone anchors the building
* The cornerstone gives all the walls where and how to line up as you build
* Each wall lines up in accordance to the cornerstone so that you don’t build a lopsided house.

**Jesus, the Cornerstone**

* Jesus is the chief cornerstone of God's building,
* He is the chief cornerstone of the Church and of us because we are the church.
* Jesus is the corner Stone but He has chosen each of us to be part of the foundation of what He is doing here.

**Ephesians 2:21 (Power point)**

 **21 We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.**

**Every part is important to build the house well.**

* Paul talks about every part of the body of Christ provides something the church needs.

**Ephesians 4:16 (Power point)**

1. **e 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.**
* God has given each of us gifts to help each other to grow and to help the church to grow.
* And every person is important!!
* Sometimes we think our role is not important because no one ever thanks us
* Or because we aren’t on the platform or have a title

 **1 Corinthians 12:22-28 (Power point)**

**22 In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. 23 And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, 24 while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. 25 This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. 26 If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.**

**27 All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.**

* But Paul reminds us that all parts of the body are important and have their place to make the church a glorious and victorious church!!
* We are a victorious church when we are being joined together in Jesus.
* The Bible tells us in Ephesians 5 that Jesus loved the church so much that He gave up His life for us.
* Jesus also said that He will present to Himself a glorious church, not a defeated church.

To close my message, I would like to give a short testimony: It is a

**Testimony of me going to church all the time when I first got saved**

I became a Christian in 1983 about 33 years ago. I received Jesus into my heart at the very first Sunday service that I attended at a church in Tokyo. I responded to the alter call, went forward and prayed.

Then after that I was at church all the time. I loved being in the house of God. I would go to a Sunday morning service, stay for lunch to fellowship with other Christians, attend a Bible study in the afternoon, and attend a Sunday evening service every single week. So I would be gone all day and come home so late on Sundays, I remember my uncle that I lived with wondered where I was on Sundays!! They had a prayer meeting every Friday night from like 10:00pm until past midnight. I would attend that meeting every Friday also. I also attended an event called, “Coffee House,” which was an outreach event.

I loved to worship, I loved to hear the Word of God, I loved to pray, I loved to fellowship with other Christians. It was my greatest joy to be in the house of God all the time!!!

When I think about those times, they were so wonderful, especially as a new Christian. But even though I have been a Christian for more than 30 years, I will never, ever want to lose that desire to go to church! I want to keep this burning desire to be in the House of God for the rest of my life.

Maybe I was able to go to almost every single meeting they had at that church in Tokyo because I was single and lived in the same area as the church was. So I am not asking you to attend every single meeting or event we have at church (of course I would love to see you come every time!!), but I believe this is also a heart issue. God values His church. Through His church, He will fulfill His purposes on this earth. His church is always on His heart and mind!

So how is your heart condition concerning coming to church? Do you have this strong passion to go to church? Let’s examine our hearts honestly.

And I hope this message has inspired and encouraged you to have even more passion for church.

**Remember:**

**Coming to church is important to God and it makes a difference in our lives and the lives of those we interact with throughout the week.**