



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)

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WHY DO YOU GO TO CHURCH?

If you ask 21st century churchgoers why it is they go to church, you'll get a variety of answers. Some people remain silent. They have no answer at all because they really don't know why they go. Some people will say, because I grew up in the church, so I have gone all my life. And then the more spiritually inclined will say, "because God tells me in His word that I should go, so I do." This tract is particularly aimed at the last response. Many people attend church because it is "the thing to do." They believe that church is something God commands, and on the basis of the command they must attend.

It is true, the Bible commands that we go to church. Hebrews 10:25 states, "let us...not forsake the gathering of ourselves together as is the manner of some." Jesus deem the church as important and speak often about building his church (Matthew 16:13-20)? Peter and Paul both attribute portions of Scripture to explaining the church (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-10). And are not the whole of the New Testament documents and New Testament letters written to the *church*? If Jesus comes to die for the church, and give His life to make and build the church, and cares so deeply for it, certainly the *church* is important (Matthew 1:10; Acts 20:28 ; Ephesians 5:25). Biblical logic alone would say that if God commands we go, then we should go!

Maybe I have given you a satisfactory answer on why you go. Maybe you are agreeing with what was stated above and have said to yourself, "Yes! That is why I go. God commands it and Jesus came to die for it, and if God thinks church is important, who am I to think otherwise!?" These though, in and of themselves, are unsatisfactory answers.

As Christians, we need to be absolutely sure why we go to church. Now we can be absolutely sure and believe the wrong *reason*. But we need to be absolutely sure about the *right* reason, for if we do not, then our entire focus and understanding of what church is all about is faulty, and our spiritual growth will be hindered as a result of this. So before you read any farther, take a moment and think about "Why you go to church." Answer honestly, then continue reading.

The church is a hospital for the sick. It is not a social gathering, or a club. It is a family of true, covenanted believers who come together to worship the Almighty God because of who He is, and that He has saved them in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. These believers are those which Paul calls *the saints*, and Peter calls *spiritual priests*. The true church is made up of those who know exactly why they go and how important it is. True believers go to church because they desire to do so, and out of this desire, they obey God's commands. They do not obey God's commands and then are furnished with a desire. Their desire, flowing out of a changed heart, pushes them to crave covenanted...

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worship. They "desire the pure milk of the word," as Peter states in 1 Peter 2:2. They desire to be changed and transformed by the renewing of the mind (Romans 12:1-2). Their desire is in heaven, as their citizenship is there (Psalm 73:25). They must cry out, "My soul thirsts for God...(Psalm 42:2)". They are craving and yearning to know God in a deeper relationship and will do anything to receive the fruit of their labor which would thrust them deep into the mind of Christ and His grace.

Our desire as Christians should be to attend church because that is where we are able to glorify God; that is what we were created to do. It is important to understand what glorifying God means, for without understanding this, then our desire cannot be properly harnessed, and again, our worship and church experience will be faulty and yield little, if any, growth.

What does it mean to glorify God? The first question of the Shorter Catechism asks, "What is the chief end of man?" Really, this question is simply asking "What is man's purpose and why did God create him?" The answer is given - "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever. (1 Corinthians 10:31; Psalm 73:25-26). We were created for the intended purpose of glorifying God. We are primarily spiritual beings who are created to worship and glorify the Creator. (Romans 1:21; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 10:31; 1 Peter 4:16). By enjoying God, we glorify Him.

But the question quickly arises, "How can a creature glorify God? Isn't God already glorious in and of Himself?" The answer is this: man is not able to add any glory to God, because God is, in and of Himself, perfectly glorious. When we come to church to worship and glorify God, this does not mean we add anything to Him. Nothing more may be added to Him in any way. If we cannot add to Him what does it mean to "glorify" Him?

Our desire for church does not come out of what we can give to God, or fulfill for God. He does not expect us to come to church and worship Him because He is getting something out of the deal. We can never add anything to God. God is perfect needing nothing from us. Yet, there are many people who believe God *needs* our worship and our praise—that is why He commands us to go to church. But to say that God needs something is to say He needs to gain something He lacks. And if God is lacking something then He is *not* God. God is perfect in all His being lacking nothing. He is the great "I Am" who is and always shall be just who He is. He cannot change, He cannot be added to and He cannot diminish. He holds the very power of eternal being in His hand. Jesus said in Matthew 5:48, "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." God is perfect, and needs nothing. So God does not *need* us. Nothing in creation can ever add anything to God. To say that we can add something to Him, is saying we have something God needs. Are we "little" gods ourselves? -certainly not. So it is not that God needs us, but rather, we need Him.

To be specific, we need from God all we can get in this life. God is the eternal spring of spiritual enrichment and nourishment, and we need to harvest as much of that spiritual nourishment in this life as we can possibly gather. We glorify God in this way: when we come with a desire to know Him more intimately, and be graciously satisfied in God for who He is, God is then glorified in that. Not in His essence, for in His essence He is always perfectly glorious. But in reflecting back to God who He is, we glorify Him. When we rightly worship God in church, and our desire is to glorify Him for who He is, we reflect back the true the image of God. All actions of worship are meaningless unless they are coupled in a right attitude of worship and desire for God, to glorify His being.

Having a right attitude and desiring to worship God in order that we gain spiritual food from Him is far different than going to church as a Pharisee thinking that I will do such and...

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such because I have to. We should do this because we need to do, desire to do, and long to do all those things which revive and restore our soul in Christ (Psalm 23:3). We come to church to glorify God, and as a result, we are satisfied by God. We come, not just to give praise as a duty, but we come to give praises to the desired end of worship—to receive spiritual food from the throne of grace. We don't go to the grocery store and give money to the cashier because it is our duty to stand in line and pay for something which we never buy. Certainly not. We go throughout the whole store gathering fruits, vegetables, and all sorts of canned items to buy and eat. We need to eat and we desire to eat because our stomachs are hungry. The spiritual stomach--our soul, mind and emotions--desires to be fed as well. We come to church and worship God in order to glorify Him, and then as a result of that glorification, we wait in eager expectation that we will receive from Him all the necessary spiritual vitamins to be restored and revived in our spirits. We need to thrive and desire prayer, Bible reading, Bible teaching, Bible preaching, Christian fellowship, and the like. From worshipping God in all those forms, we are fed.

Christians are to be harvesters of God's grace. The harvest field is any place where the grace of God may touch and enrich our souls. And for the Christian who desires God in this way (and all true Christians should desire God in this way), church is the dessert, with the cherry on top. All week long the Christian searches the Scriptures, has devotions, prays, meditates upon God (Psalm 1:2; 119:1ff) and does everything they can to be fed meals of spiritual food so that on Sunday he may use all his newfound knowledge to worship God more than he did last week. He becomes so zealous for Christ that he must gain more spiritual food each time he worships. Many Christians starve spiritually because they think all the satisfaction there is in Christian life is to be found on Sunday mornings in a church service. But if you only ate once a week would you not starve to death eventually? Glorifying God on Sunday is the pinnacle of worship. All that we learn through the week, and all that we glean from the Sunday service should force us to cry out in a resounding voice, "But it is good for me to trust in God...In God I will praise His word, in the Lord I will praise His Word...O worship the Lord in the beauty of Holiness...You are my hiding place and my shield..." (Psalm 73:28; 55:10; 96:9; 119:114)

For the Christian, worship is the expression of what we know to be true about God. We desire to tell God what we know about Him. If we know little *we worship little*. If we know much we worship much. But let it never be stated by God towards his people, "These people honour me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me." (Isaiah 29:13). We should never go to church just for the sake of going. We should never attend church just because it's the thing to do while our hearts are far from God. It is anti-Christian to go to church *just because we have to*. We go because we desire and yearn to glorify Him, so that we may be satisfied in Christ. It is our feast, our food and our life. We need God and we need to worship Him for His glory and our sakes! God does not need us, we need Him. God does not need to improve His spiritual stance, we do. God does not need our worship, we need it, for when we desire to go to church, and we realize we need Him, only then will we reflect God's glory, and only then will we be satisfied in Him.

The goal of the Christian life is to reflect back to God the image of Christ in us. And church is the place where the body of Christ reflects back to Christ His glory. Their heart's desire is to glorify Christ, to learn more about Christ, and then glorify Christ all the more. It is an endless cycle because worship is an end in and of itself. It is why we go. It should be because we desire to glorify Christ. So, why do YOU go to church?

Dr. C. Matthew McMahon

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON
CHURCH THEME: WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR
AND TREMBLING. (Philippians 2:12)

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm.**

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
Morning	<i>Today: 18/05/2008</i>	<i>Next Week: 25/05/2008</i>	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	John Poh	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Marc Vrambout	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Message:</i>	The LORD Is Jealous For His Holy Name	Esteeming Others Better than Yourself	NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
<i>Text:</i>	Ezekiel 39:25	Philippians 2:1-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome: We would like to welcome Pr Marc Vrambout, our speaker for this Lord's Day. He is missionary to the Jews in Belgium under auspices of The Messianic Testimony. • School of Theology at Metropolitan Tabernacle: The theme for this year programme is "Stand Fast in the Faith". It will be held from 8th – 10th Jul 2008. For further details, please help yourself to the application form available at the Book Table. • Examinations: Please pray for those who are preparing for their examinations: Grace, Joy, Josiah, Sophia, Hubert, Nicolas, Rachel and Yetta. • Sabbath School: Leaflets are placed on the book table to encourage children of ages 6-12 to attend Sunday School. Please feel free to distribute those leaflets to any child, especially yours, who may be interested in joining in. Please note that class will be held at the Library after the morning worship service. • YAF meeting with SGAT: Please note that the SGAT monthly meeting will be held on Friday, 23 May 08, at 7 pm. For 2008, the theme is on "Prophecy". The title of the message is "The Detail of Prophecy".
<i>Organist:</i>	Pr Mark Chen	Anthony	
Evening			
<i>Chairman:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Jonathan Kim	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Marc Vrambout	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Message:</i>	The Need of a Forgiving Heart	From Lust to Adultery	
<i>Text:</i>	Matthew 6:12	Proverbs 7:6-27	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Anthony	Joy	
Other Duties			
	<i>Today: 18/05/2008</i>	<i>Next Week: 25/05/2008</i>	
<i>Ushers</i>	Josiah / Yetta	Jonathan / Sharon	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Hui Min	Carol	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Constance	Maureen	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>Bible Study:</i>	Catechism Class	Catechism Class	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 23 May	7:00pm	Young Adults Fellowship: Combined SGAT Meeting	
Sat 24 May	4.00pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Led by Pr Mark Chen	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
Offering:	£255.20	Lunch: £29.00	
Book Sale:	£6.95	YAF: £33.22	

Memory Verse

Last Week (May 08 Wk 2): Psalm 139:2

Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,
 thou understandest my thought afar off.

This Week (May 08 Wk 3): Psalm 139:3

Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and
 art acquainted with all my ways.