

Your Sunday Priority

We have entered that time of year everyone in N.E. Ohio has longed to see for the past six months - summer! With the warmer temperatures and the school year ended, there are a thousand items that compete for our time throughout the week, and that would include our church gatherings on Sunday mornings. We all have favorite activities that could easily fill up our Sunday mornings and it would be easy to justify our lack of attendance at both the Sunday School/Adult classes at 9:30 and our time of worship at 10:30. But the fact remains, every believer ought to desire and make a priority in attending the Sunday morning gatherings of Grace Church. You are not merely a spectator attending a game of a sub-par professional athletic team rather you are a participant in the life of your local church. Here are three reasons why this is important (this certainly is not an all inclusive list):



1. Your attendance does matter. Even in a church our size, it would be easy to say, "I would not be missed." Whether it is expressed to you or not, you would be missed because your attendance ministers to others. Paul closes his letter to the Corinthian church with these words, "Comfort one another, agree with one another" (2 Corinthians 13:11~ESV). This type of interaction within the church body can only occur when the body is gathered together, and Sunday morning is one opportunity in which the "one anothers" are lived out in the life of the body. The New Testament refers to the "one anothers" over 60 times which is primarily used in reference of believers loving and caring for each other. There are no "lone rangers" in the church. It was designed by God that we are dependent upon one another.

2. Sunday mornings are a part of your spiritual diet. It has only been over the past 15 years that I have had a renewed love and appreciation of the Gospel, not because I believe that it was powerless to save, but rather I thought that once a person was saved, the Gospel was just a boring story. That could not be any further from the truth as the constant reminder of the Gospel to believers is aimed to strengthen us. In Paul's closing thoughts to the church in Rome, he reminded them that there was strength to be gained from the "preaching of Jesus Christ" and his Gospel (Romans 16:25 ~ESV). This is what we aim to do on Sundays at Grace Church -- to strengthen and equip this church through the disciplined teaching of God's Word and His Gospel in order to mature believers to the fullness in Christ Jesus. This is part of your spiritual diet, offered to children, teens, adults, and senior saints twice on Sunday mornings. It is ludicrous to think

we can go a long period time without the proper physical nourishment and not experience the effects of malnutrition. The same can be said of the importance of our spiritual nourishment. Just as a good breakfast is required to start your day well, so is a steady diet of God's word in the gathering of believers required to start your week off.

3. God expects it. Sounds like one could become legalistic on "church attendance," but the fact of the matter is, God expects us to not forsake the assembling of believers. This was a problem among the Christian Jews to whom the book of Hebrews was written. Because of their faith in Christ, many were ostracized from their families and suffered numerous degrees of persecutions. Because of this they were in needed of encouragement to hold onto the faith, to run with endurance "looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith" (12:1~ESV). Because of these trials, some were in the habit of neglecting to meet together. It was during this meeting time that love, good works and encouragement were expressed to one another-- "...let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (10:24,25~ESV).

The Elders of Grace Church have set aside Sundays as the day in which Grace Church as a whole is to gather to worship God, receive instruction from His Word, and to also encourage and express our love to one another and be a catalysis of continuing this throughout the week. Sundays are intended to remind us of our priority to worship God, to fellowship with other believers, and to live a life that is shaped by the Scripture to conform our on-going walk in the Spirit. By getting into the habit of not meeting together, we ultimately lose our focus on our priorities as a church.

Does this mean we should never miss on Sundays? No, but the question that should be asked is whether or not my absence falls under "continually neglecting" the meeting of Grace Church. John Stott says it best: "If the church is central to God's purpose as seen in both history and the gospel, it must also be central in our lives. How can we take lightly what God takes so seriously? How dare we push to the circumference what God has placed at the center?"

So this summer, when Sunday morning rolls around, ask yourself, what is at the center of this day?