

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Family Time

Bill Brinkworth

As Paul concludes his letter to the Roman church in Romans 16, he spent the whole chapter remembering Christians he knew in the ministry. He named 28 individuals and remarked what they had meant to him, or how they had been useful in the ministry. They were more than acquaintances to him. The people in a church were close to his heart.

Going to church for us should also be more than just nodding at people as they pass us in the aisle or shaking their hands as we see them in Sunday school. Church is where those of like faith and beliefs gather. It should be a place removed from the world, where we can be with our own kind — Christians. In that place, we are no longer a “peculiar” people as the unsaved see us. In that fellowship, we are with others of similar beliefs. We are with members of the family of God.

Church is a place where some hear the Gospel for the first time and get saved. It should be a place where the Bible is taught, and people learn more about God's Word. In

church, Christians can hear what the Lord has laid on the under shepherd's heart, and learn how they can be better Christians. It is a place where people can be burdened for needs they see or hear about and can get involved in a ministry themselves.

Church also is a place where we are among those of like faith. I know I cannot speak for all churches, as too many have too much of the world in them, but church should be a place where we can be far from godless living, and be closer to God. In church, we can be encouraged by other Christians. All week we are swimming against the current of the world. It can spiritually tire us out. Being around our own kind can reward us with advice, encouragement, or even seeing how other Christians handle their problems; so we can successfully run our own spiritual race.

Those Christians that are not faithful in church attendance miss the help and encouragement of being around their own kind. It is not just the preaching, teaching, church dinners, and special events that we need. We need to feel, for the time we are with others of like faith; that we are not alone in this world. We need to know there are others like us. No wonder Paul addressed many individually. They were important to him, because they were part of his spiritual family — the family of God.

“Going to church is family time.” — *Charles W. Tobey*

Back Seat Problem

Author Unknown

“I wonder,” said good Parson Jones
With a little troubled frown,
“If there is any way to get
You folks seated farther down?”

“You see I have to talk across
So many empty pews,
Before my voice can reach the back,
I fear my point you lose.

“And then I feel so lonesome,
Way up here and you clear back there,
It’s hard to feel you’re with me
When I come to God in prayer.

“I wonder if you folks are scared
Of what I’m going to preach
That you hurry so to park
In the farthest back seat?”

“Or do you fear the church some day
Will suddenly catch afire?
Or do you want to slip out quick
If of my subject you tire?”

“I wish you’d come up closer
So I wouldn’t have to shout;
If you don’t, I’m going to have
Those back seats taken out!”

“A lot of church members who are singing ‘Standing on the Promises’ are actually just sitting on the premises.”

What My Absence in Church Did

Author Unknown

- It made some question the reality of Christianity.
- It made some think that I was a pretender.
- It made many regard my spiritual welfare and that of others as a matter of small concern.
- It weakened the effect of the church service.
- It made it more difficult for the preacher to preach.
- It discouraged the brethren, and therefore robbed them of a blessing.
- It caused others to stay away from church.
- It made it harder for me to meet the temptations I faced this week.
- It gave me a poor Christian testimony with those that know I am a Christian.
- It gave the Devil more power over lost souls.
- It encouraged the bad habit of non-church going.

“God wants full custody of His children, not just Sunday visiting rights.”

Upper or Supper Room?

Author Unknown

The early church prayed in the upper room. Today's church cooks in the supper room. Today the supper room, or the church kitchen, has taken the place of the "upper room".

Play has taken the place of prayer, and feasting has taken the place of fasting. There are more full stomachs than there are bended knees and broken hearts. There is more fire in the range in the kitchen, than there is in the pulpit. When you build a fire in the church kitchen and the smells permeate the building, it often puts out the fire in the pulpit. Ice cream awaiting to be eaten chills the fervor of spiritual life.

The early Christians were not cooking in the supper room the day the Holy Ghost came. They were praying in the upper room. They were not waiting on tables. They were waiting on God. They were not waiting for the fire from the stove, but for the fire from above. They were detained by the command of God, and not entertained by the cunning of men. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, not stuffed with a stew or roast.

Oh, I would like the cooking crew put out, and the praying band put in. We need less ham and sham, and more Heaven; less pie, and more piety; less use for the cookbook, and more use for the old Book. Put out the fire in the kitchen and build it on the altar; more love and more life; fewer dinners and getting more sinners in the church. Let us have a church full of waiters on God, and a church full of servers, serving God.

“The church is to feed the sheep, not to entertain the goats!” — A. W. Tozer

The Devil's Tactics in Today's Church

J. Vernon McGee

When the Devil saw that persecution would not stop the church, he changed to a different tactic. He joined the church. He began to hurt the church from the inside. He still does that today. He attacks the validity of the Word of God, and he tries to discredit the Gospel. If that doesn't work, he tries to discredit the man who preaches the Gospel.

“The Christian church is a society of sinners. It is the only society in the world in which membership is based upon the single qualification that the candidate shall be unworthy of membership.” — *Morrison*