

"Returning to God in Church"

Hebrews 10:19-25

Introduction

The church has been and will continue to be God's centerpiece for His representation in history. God chose the church to be His official representative on earth to exemplify three things: His Son, His Kingdom and His truth. Therefore, as God's representatives, members of the church are called to display Christ to the world, demonstrate God's Kingdom Agenda and defend His truth against the enemy's lies. If the church fails in this three-fold mission, the world cannot witness heaven at work and cannot know "the manifold wisdom of God" (Ephesians 3:10). Scripture describes the church as salt and light, and it is meant to impact the world with a healing and restorative presence (Matthew 5:13-14). Its absence is deeply felt when the church does not fulfill its purpose. Nothing could be more vital for God's people than to serve as His spiritual representatives on earth.

The church provides the context for developing kingdom disciples who will serve as the visible, verbal, and full-time representatives for Christ. Kingdom disciples use their gifts and talents to impact people's lives for God through evangelism and spiritual growth. Each disciple has a different gift given by God and designed to serve a purpose in the body of Christ. Just as a body is made up of different parts with unique functions, the body of Christ is made up of many members who have different gifts (Romans 12:4-5). Each gift is significant and should not be overlooked. The church should be the training ground for disciples to learn to use their gifts. When we as disciples are properly exercising our gifts, we contribute to the spiritual development of ourselves and others.

The church is also the primary context for spiritual community, connectivity and accountability for believers. Believers should be connected to a community holding us accountable, a community that is not merely a physical presence or facility but a spiritually operating environment. This community cannot abandon meeting together (Hebrews 10:24-25). We need each other for encouragement, accountability and motivation to continue loving others and doing good. We were never meant to walk this Christian life alone. Through the church, we connect with God and connect with the people of God who remind us of our mission and give us the strength to accomplish it.

Getting Started

1. What happens when the parts of a body, a group or an organization do not work together correctly?
2. What are the reasons people give for not visiting, joining or participating in a church?

Let's Get Personal

1. Has your view of the church, its mission and your part in that mission changed in light of this message?
2. How have you seen the church impact the world for Christ or fail to do so? How have you personally been involved in the spiritual development of others through the church?
3. Where are you lacking in your connection with the church? Are you using your gifts? Are you meeting with other believers and allowing them to encourage you and hold you accountable?

Take the Next Step

1. How would you explain to an unbeliever the meaning and importance of church? Commit to inviting unbelievers to attend church with you this coming week or invite believers who are not already part of a church.
2. What are your spiritual gifts? (Take the assessment [here](#) if you don't know). How can you begin to use your spiritual gifts right now in your church?
3. What are ways you can build community and accountability among your Christian friends? How can you encourage fellow believers this week?
4. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: Hebrews 10:19-25; Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 3:10; Ephesians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Matthew 16:18-19; 1 Timothy 3:14-16; 1 Corinthians 12:18-26; Acts 2:41-47; Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 2:11-22.

Renew Your Mind

"And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

Hebrews 10:24-25
