



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

October 13, 2019

GOING BACK TO CHURCH

Several times over the past few months I've heard someone talk about "going back to church." Or actually doing it. Many would be quick, as I often am, to point out that there is a more basic duty than that: returning to God. That picking up a ritual practice is no sign that one is right with God, something the Old Testament prophets proclaimed repeatedly and fiercely. And we are right in making that distinction.

But I wonder if, in my theological finery, I'm not missing a basic truth in plain dress. You can't return to God (or turn to Him) without "going back to church."

Sunday morning communion with God (when the saints are meeting together) in the bass boat or on the beach is self-deceit. In other words, you can't be right with God and stay away from His people.

When I say His people, I'm not saying any religious group or denomination that happens to call themselves a church. I mean the true church of Jesus Christ, according to the New Testament pattern.

But the point is, the Lord adds us to the body of Christ the same time that salvation occurs, as per **Acts 2:47** "*...the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*"

So maybe I shouldn't quibble when someone says they want to "go back to church." Maybe I should just offer to pick them up Sunday morning.

J. Randal Matheny

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Kendall Bear
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Service Times:

Sunday

Bible Study 10 am
Worship Service 10:45 am
Worship Service 6 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study 7:00 pm

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IMITATE ME

As Christians, we should always set a good example for others to follow. However, when we look closely at our lives, we often realize that we would not really want others to follow in our footsteps.

Usually we know ourselves better than anyone except, of course, God. The apostle Paul knew the importance of living a life that others could follow, and thus be pleasing to God. He often encouraged others to follow his example. Why? Because he knew he was setting the right example for them! Consider what he said to the Philippians: *“Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.”* **(Philippians 3:7)**. Could we honestly, without hesitation, ask people we truly care about to follow us as a “pattern” of Christianity today? Do we want them judged with the same judgment we will receive?

Paul could say this because he knew that he was doing everything within his power to imitate Christ; and if others would imitate him they would have the same reward he was to receive. *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing”* **(II Timothy 4:7-8)**.

Paul frequently encouraged Titus and Timothy to set a good example. To Titus he said: *“In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you”* **(Titus 2:7-8)**. And to Timothy *“...Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in spirit, in faith, in purity”* **(I Timothy 4:12)**.

Think about it; what kind of example are we setting in “good works,” “doctrine,” “reverence,” “incorruptibility,” “sound speech,” “word,” “love,” “spirit,” “faith,” “purity”? We should encourage others to follow our example but we must live lives worthy of that desire.

“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” **(I Corinthians 11:1)**.

Andrew Laux