

“Is Church An Optional Extra?”
“Getting the Most Out of Church” — Part 4
Ephesians 5:15-17

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Ephesians 5:15-21

Review: Last week, we began to focus our attention on putting our theology into practice. It is not enough to just know the truth, we need to live out the truth in very practical ways.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. James 1:22

*Our study thus far has shown us that prayer
is a significant part of what church is all about.*

1. My house will be called a house of prayer.

2. Church is about more than just you!

Question: Did you by chance, ask God where He wanted you to sit today?

“Church is not an optional extra?”

Question: Why do we go to church?

1. We go to church because we belong together around God.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.
1 Corinthians 12:27

But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"
1 Corinthians 12:18-21

After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body.
Ephesians 5:29-30

If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.
1 Timothy 5:8

2. We go to church because we need a spurring on.

...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
Hebrews 10:23-25

Definition:

We use the word "*provoke*" meaning to offend, to irritate, to incense; but its original meaning is to "arouse, to excite, to call into action."

***"Assembly and fellowship are
two evidences of vital faith"***

Wycliffe Bible Commentary

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.
Hebrews 3:12-13

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.
1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Application: We come not to spectate or consume, nor do we come even to have our own personal encounter with God. We come to love and serve. We come to spur one another on. Loving, serving, strengthening, and encouraging the family of faith is God's will and God's design. The danger of apostasy lurks in the failure of believers to meet together for mutual help and mutual encouragement.

Something to think about: Do you think of church as a chance to encourage, build up, love, and spur on your brothers and sisters? Or, like the recipients of Hebrews, have you been neglecting this important ministry?