

EMPTY SEATS



WHY CHRISTIANS, AND CHURCHES, NEED
TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT ATTENDANCE

WHAT'S NOT OUR FOCUS:

- We're not talking about a lack of attendance because of physical infirmity.
- We're not talking about occasional moments when our jobs require us to be away.
- This is not condemning traveling on weekends.
- Arguing that attendance is a baseline or checklist for determining faithfulness.



WHAT IS OUR FOCUS:

- The ~~inability~~ unwillingness to get up and going in a timely manner.
- The unwillingness to momentarily inconvenience ourselves in the service of Someone/something greater than myself.
- The genuinely unconsidered aspects of a lack of consistent attendance.



WHY CHRISTIANS, AND CHURCHES, NEED TO BE SERIOUS ABOUT ATTENDANCE:

- Because those who do not attend consistently impede effective evangelism.
- When serious inquirers see us doing things other than assembling with our brethren, what does that say?
- How can I be a part of the body but consistently be absent from its gatherings? (Romans 12.4ff)



WHY CHRISTIANS, AND CHURCHES, NEED TO BE SERIOUS ABOUT ATTENDANCE:

- Because those who only attend sporadically confuse new believers.
 - Those new in the faith are particularly susceptible to negative influences (cf. 1 Timothy 3.6).
 - What is a new convert to understand when they see members consistently choosing to be absent.
 - What is a new convert to think when members are consistently absent and the church does nothing?



WHY CHRISTIANS, AND CHURCHES, NEED TO BE SERIOUS ABOUT ATTENDANCE:

- Because those who choose not to attend consistently grieve, and disregard, their leaders.
- Shepherds have a responsibility to oversee; we have a responsibility to submit to them. (Hebrews 13.17)
- Does persistent sporadic attendance demonstrate a submissive attitude toward one's shepherds?
- Does failure to attend consistently bring my shepherds comfort or grief?



WHY CHRISTIANS, AND CHURCHES, NEED TO BE SERIOUS ABOUT ATTENDANCE:

- Because consistent attenders are pointedly discouraged by those who choose not to gather.
 - What am I communicating to my brethren when I willingly choose to be absent? (Romans 12.10-11)
 - What message does a church send when it willingly tolerates, without objection, those who refuse to make gathering with Christ's body a priority?
 - There is a communal concern and benefit that is experienced in attendance. (Hebrews 10.23ff)



A FEW FINAL WORDS:

- Attendance is not the end all, be all of Christianity.
- Gathering together as a church is a fundamental aspect of the life of a Christian.
- Sometimes we're just too busy — and God and His people aren't the choice we need to sacrifice.
- How awful to be willingly absent at a moment when a brother or sister needed the encouragement of my presence!
- My attendance, or lack thereof, communicates my regard for God, His Christ, and His people.

