

## Tips On Church Attendance

Too many folks just get up and simply attend church on Sundays, if they attend at all. Then they expect some miracle to take them by storm. When it doesn't, they blame the pastor, the music team, or someone who may have looked at them wrong. But coming to church requires some preparation for worship from all of us, some prayer to transition from the work week into a totally different atmosphere, and an attitude of expectation that goes beyond what we want from God to what He demands from us.

Below are some suggestions I came up with while instructing my son about being prepared for worship on Sunday mornings. I noticed he simply grabbed his Bible on Sundays, slouched in his chair during the worship, and bode his time waiting until that blissful 11:30 time when church was over. I also got tired of asking about his Sunday School class: "What did you talk about in Sunday School today son?" The answer is normally, "Uhh, Abraham, I think." Therefore, I came up with a list of hoops I want my children to jump through each week before church. Then I decided that we could all take some of these pointers, so I added some that are more adult-centered. Here they are:

1. Make it your priority to attend Sunday worship every single week. Don't allow anything except an occasional vacation to steal you away from corporate worship with the body of believers.
2. Make it your goal to find something at the church that you can do, from setting up chairs to just shaking someone's hand and greeting them with, "Good morning!" In short, decide to be a blessing to someone, anyone.
3. Read the Bible passage where the pastor left off the previous week. That's where he'll begin the next Sunday. If you're really serious about getting everything you can from the message, do some study on the passage (paragraph) and come up with some observations on your own about the text. You might concoct some questions and wait for the pastor to answer them during the course of his message. If he doesn't answer your questions about the text during the sermon, then write him and ask him personally about them.
4. Bring your Bible and open it every single week and a pen to take notes with during the sermon. Utilize the outline provided on the bulletin, and fill in the blanks provided. It's designed to keep you attentive during the message.
5. Write your check for the offering box *before* you get to church, and offer it to God as worship when you put it into the box. Ultimately, your financial giving is an act of worship, so don't take that lightly.

6. Go to bed early on Saturday night so that you can wake up without being tired. Church doesn't even start until 9:15, and that's far later than school starts or when you clock in at work.
7. Pray for church staff, the overseers, the deacons, and the teachers. Single out one per day. While you're at it, add five families to that list each day, and pray for them too – then write them an Email to let them know you prayed for them.
8. Leave for church at a time when you can get there at least ten minutes before church begins. Your help might be needed somewhere, or you could at least get to know someone you've not met yet during the time you stand around looking to be of use.
9. Try to sit in a different location each week during the worship service instead of gravitating to the same chairs out of habit.
10. If you feel the sermon is boring or that the preacher isn't "on his game" on any particular Sunday, consider that you might be the problem. Maybe he did his job, but you didn't because you weren't prepared to listen.
11. Find someone you don't know at church and meet them personally. Tell them who you are, and listen to them talk about themselves if they so choose.
12. Find a person or family once a month to take to lunch after church. Get to know some folks, let them get to know you, and allow God to bless you through them and them through you.

Going to church can be a powerful weekly lift for all of us, but we will get out of it only what we put into it. It certainly has all the potential to be the greatest day of our week. But it will be what you make of it. I challenge you to come to church with these points in mind. Come and expect to be blessed, and come with the goal of honoring Christ through service to him. Let's all plan and schedule our lives to offer the sacrifice of praise to God.

Yours,

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