

Why I Don't Go to Church



*"I Can Be a Christian
without the Church"*

Video



Some incomplete understandings of what it means to be a Christian and what it means to be a church:



- 1) “I don’t want to deal with all the mess in the church; I just want to follow Jesus.”



- If you want to follow Jesus, notice where he goes and with whom he spends his time. (See the Gospels.)



2) “Becoming a Christian is a personal matter; it doesn’t have anything to do with the church.”



The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.—1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (NIV)



- When we become a Christian, we are incorporated into the body of Christ.



Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household...—Ephesians 2:19 (NIV)



- When we become a Christian, we become part of the community of faith.



Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel....–Philippians 1:27 (NRSV)



- When we become a Christian, we are enlisted into God's army.



...For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise. –Galatians 3:26-27, 29 (NRSV)



- When we become a Christian, we become brothers and sisters in God's family.



3) “Why can’t I be a Christian without the church?”



- Christianity has never existed as an individualized religion; it is social by its very nature. (See Acts.)



4) “You have to justify your own institution.”



“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have



given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”—John 17:20-23 (NIV)



- Jesus prays for those who believe in him to be unified.



Two challenges:



- 1) Invite someone to come to church with you. If he/she says, “I can be a Christian without the church”:



- Talk about what they mean by “Church” and “Christian”.
- Help them see that according to the Bible, being a Christian is being part of the church.
- Invite them to experience a group of believers who are learning to live this new life together.



2) Take our relationships with other believers very seriously.