

How To Increase Church Attendance

An exact analysis of the causes of nonchurch attendance should be made and an answer given to all excuses and reasons. An accurate examination of these reveals the following facts:

- Sin is no longer abhorred -- its abominable characteristics are excused or denied.
- No need of a Savior is realized. Man is not lost and a theory of self-direction is followed.
- The Bible as divine authority is rejected; its guidance is ignored. Holy reverence for the Bible is lost.
- Religious teachers have departed from the New Testament pattern of the church; they no longer regard it as the blood-bought institution of Christ.
- The church is regarded as just another social force in the world; it is not the called-out of God.
- Church programs, brotherhood projects, and denominational policies claim the time of members; no prayerful study of the Bible is made.
- The opinions of men are substituted for the gospel truth; the gospel as God's power to save has been rejected.

All of these causes must be removed before much improvement in church attendance may be expected. The awfulness of sin must be taught and felt; the heart must be touched with the deep guilt of sin, and a keen anguish of soul in genuine repentance must be experienced. Man is lost; he must know that he is lost and that he cannot save himself. When people have been brought to a contrite conviction of sin, they will appreciate more the dire need of a Savior.

The Bible as the word of God must be believed and a reverence for the Bible must be cultivated. Religious leaders must respect the Bible as the only guide for man. The church must be exulted as a divine institution with Christ as its head. No institution must rival the church, nor rob it of its glory. Church membership must be taken seriously and members must be expected to live righteous and holy lives.

Many people do not know why they are members of a church. They grew up in the church, and have grown up in its environment without knowing why they are in it. They have been taught that one can be saved without being a member of a denomination; hence, the denomination is of little value. They must know that there is no substitute for the church of our Lord; that His

church is not a denomination, neither is it composed of denominations. All denominations must be abandoned.

All divisive religious names, man-made creeds, and distinctive denominational doctrines must be given up; faith in the Christ as the Son of God must be emphasized. Programs of the church must leave out their entertaining features and include constructive principles of Bible teaching. A relinquishment of all the religious theories of man, a penitent return to gospel truth, a sincere and pious devotion to God in everyday life, and a loyal life adorned with the graces of God's word will bring a revival in church attendance.

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