



## Bulletin 35

# Why it's worth going to Church!

Dear Church!

29<sup>th</sup> June 2021

As Covid19 restrictions fall away and we begin to feel more normal, I have been reflecting on some of the things we had previously been doing as church before lockdown yet have not missed as things return to normal! Indeed, things we might now feel positively released from and ask ourselves why we ever did them in the first place! Let me assure you at this point that attending church in person whenever we can does *not* fall into this category!

So, I thought it would be worth dwelling on why returning to church in person is so very important in our progressively liberated lives! Here are five things to consider.

### Firstly, meeting together as the body of is a transforming experience.

Paul, in Romans 12, commands us,

*“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

We have managed to retain something of that in our online times together through the power of the Spirit in Word and prayer, but there is nothing to beat the physical presence of fellow Christians rejoicing together in what transforms and fires us – the rescue of our very souls from oblivion and re-gifting of eternal life. We need to see each other’s smiling faces as we sing, as the living Word finds its mark, as our prayers rise together and as we gather around one table to take bread and wine. All these things we have found substitutes and ‘make-do’s’ for during covid-times, but none can match them online and nothing can equal a handshake, an embrace, or a hug. Let alone a cup of coffee or tea and a chat together. By these things we affirm our church family and faith. No wonder then the writer to the Hebrew Christians writes (Heb 10:23-25 ESV):

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

Meeting together encourages us and spurs us on in the faith!

**Secondly, we meet together to be accountable.** He writes (Heb 2:1-3):

*We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?*

It's so easy, if we live our Christian lives in isolation, to make up our own rules of godliness and even to interpret the Bible in a manner which suits our desired behaviour and relieves us of our conscience. We must expose ourselves to accountability if we want the assurance of being 'on-track' with our faith. (See also Proverbs 3:5-6!)

**Thirdly, we are family!**

In Mark 3:32-34 – we find Jesus 'at church' in the synagogue:

*A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!"*

Jesus regarded the church family as above his own. If it's that important to him, meeting with our church family should be to us. We travel together, we keep each other up to the mark, we bear one another's burdens...

**Fourthly, we need to fight against worldly propaganda.**

Old Testament wisdom literature, most notably the Psalms and Proverbs, repeatedly distinguishes between the wise and the wicked. The wise being those who trust and seek to follow our Lord's wisdom and the wicked being those who have other bright ideas of their own! The world gets its say in our lives for up to six and a half days a week! Sunday morning redresses the balance.

**Fifth and finally, we have been commissioned with a task.**

At the end of Matthew's Gospel Jesus says:

*"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."*

Our Lord has conferred the means to do this upon his church. No one person can do it on their own. Our Lord has gifted us to work as a team – none can prevail without the other's gifts! We need each other!

And that, in short, is the overall message – as those of faith, seeking to walk with the Lord, to travel as aliens and strangers thought this 'foreign land', we need each other! I think that has been proved to us over this last year and a half – we really have missed each other! And so a family should!

So if you've not returned in person yet, please do at your earliest opportunity! It's not just important to you, it's important to the life of our whole family! We need each other!

*Every blessing in Christ,*  
**Rev Karl**