

# Make Church a Part of Your Life

## WEEKLY SERMONETTE

### "Church"

By Jeff Nielsen, Minister at Norton Christian Church

Occasionally, I will be asked if I really believe it is important to "go to church." The question is never from unbelievers. Some have been deeply hurt by church politics. Others have been bored by church services. Some just see church as a waste of time. Others see "going to church" as an outdated form of community that is no longer needed in the computer age of social networking. Some that ask are just looking for validation of their abandonment of "going to church."

This is not an easy question to address as the Western expression of church has lost its way on many levels. Far from being a place of community that practices radical forgiveness and accountability as Jesus envisioned. Far from being a mission-driven community sharing God's grace with all nations and a community, we seem to have sunk into rival marketers of easy religion pedaled to consumer-driven attendees or into rival politically aligned preservers of our version of national values.

On the other hand, many are genuinely blessed by their association today with what is called "church." They find support, help, encouragement, and friendship. They can't understand why some would be so critical of something they love. In addition, oppressed and persecuted believers in other cultures can-

not fathom having the freedom to gather with other believers and not taking advantage of it.

Here are a few biblical observations for all of us to ponder and discuss:

Jesus and the writers of the New Testament did not envision a Christianity that does not involve Christian community. Jesus sent out his followers two

by two. He called together a small group of twelve to be his first community. His primary teachings centered on relationships and life lived together. While much of his teaching and lifestyle brought him into conflict with religious leaders in religious situations, his regular practice was to participate in those gatherings to redeem them

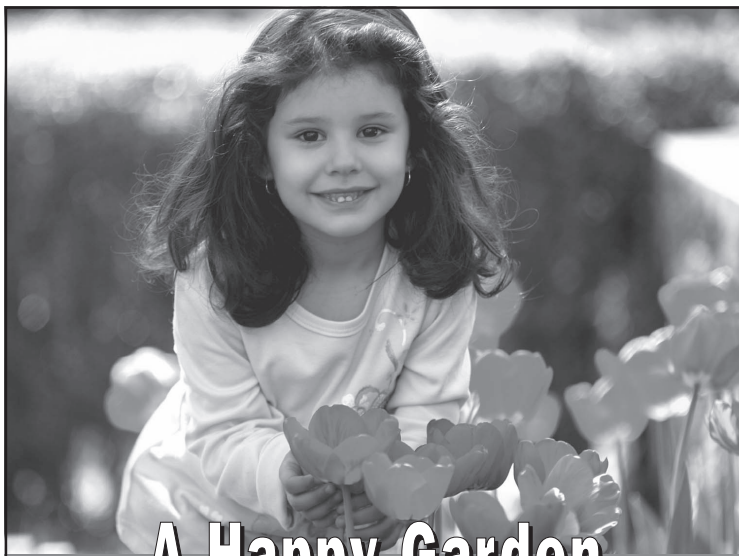
and restore them to their intended purpose. He didn't abolish or abandon them.

The word translated church in the bible, ekklesia, is not even a religious word. It simply means "assembly" or "gathering" of people. What makes it "Christian" is that the gathering is done in "The name of the Lord Jesus Christ".

Reading the letters of the New Testament the first few verses of them reveal this focus, using a formula like, "To the gathering of God's people in ..." This gathering together in Jesus' name was so important that they were urged not to forsake their times of meeting together, but to use these opportunities to stir each other up to love and good deeds Hebrews 10:19-25.

The church was to be a community that lived the lifestyle of Jesus and called each other to that lifestyle all over the world in different cultures. The church is to live with "one another" and treat "each other" in community.

Jesus put in place, died for and is returning to save forever His church. He never intended for His followers to go it alone. Christians are to regularly gather with other followers to help them live the life of Christ and remember the life, words, sacrifice, and resurrection of their Lord, together. Are you?



### A Happy Garden

**A budding gardener must learn one of the most important rules of successful gardening. The better the soil, the more beautiful the flowers. Maybe you can get by with tired old dirt, but your garden won't be as vibrant or your plants as happy.**

**As a child's parents teach her to enrich the soil and tend a garden, they can also teach her how to have a vibrant spirit. In Ecclesiastes 3:12 it says "...there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live." Where can you learn to grow a happy spirit? In your house of worship your children learn about their Heavenly Father with stories and songs. Their spirits are cultivated with His unconditional love.**

**Enrich your spirit regularly in God's House. Feel more vibrant instead of just getting by. Grow a happy family as you worship and learn of God's love!**

Sunday Acts 11.1-18	Monday Acts 11.19-30	Tuesday Acts 12.1-19	Wednesday Acts 12.20-13.12	Thursday Acts 13.13-52	Friday Ezekiel 37.1-14	Saturday Joel 2.28-3.8
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New 2008 Chrysler Town & Country LX Mini Van — Inferno red with gray cloth, 7 passenger seating with flexible seating option, 3.8 V-6, automatic overdrive front and rear air conditioning, tilt, speed control, power seats, windows, locks and mirrors, power side doors and lift gate, sunscreen glass, keyless entry with remote start. List Price \$28,905.00.

New 2008 Dodge Ram 1/2 Ton Quad Cab Short Box 4 WD — Cool vanilla with gray cloth 40/20/40 seating, SLT 5.7 Hemi DOD engine, 5 speed automatic overdrive, air, tilt wheel, speed control, power seats, windows, locks, CD player, touch shift transfer case, cool chrome package, 20" chrome wheels, keyless entry. List Price \$39,070.00.

New 2008 Dodge Ram 3/4 Ton Regular Cab 4 WD — Bright silver with gray cloth 40/20/40 seating, SXT decor, 5.7 Hemi V-8, 5 speed automatic, air, tilt, speed control, power windows, locks and mirrors, CD player, trailer tow group. List Price \$32,440.00.

2008 Dodge Ram 3/4 Ton Quad Cab Shortbox 4 WD — Inferno red with gray cloth 40/20/40 seating, SLT, Bighorn equipment package, 6.7 Cummins turbo diesel, 6 speed automatic, air, tilt, speed control, power seats, windows, locks and trailer tow mirrors, anti spin rear axle, CD player, touch shift transfer case, aluminum wheels, keyless entry. List Price \$46,300.00.

2008 Dodge Ram 3500 1 Ton Quad Cab Long Box Dual Wheel Pickup — White with gray cloth 40/20/40 seating, SLT 6.7 Cummins diesel, 6 speed automatic, anti spin, air conditioning, tilt wheel, speed control, power seat, windows, locks and power trailer tow mirrors, CD player, fold flat storage seat, trailer tow package, keyless entry. List Price \$48,100.00.

2008 Dodge Ram 1/2 Ton Quad Cab Short Box 4 WD — Electric blue with gray cloth 40/20/40 seating, SLT 5.7 Hemi V-8, automatic overdrive, air, tilt, speed control, power seat, windows, locks and mirrors, CD player, Big Horn package, chrome moldings, 20" aluminum wheels, trailer tow package, keyless entry. List Price \$37,875.00.

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