

Encouraging teens to go to church...



Attending church on Sunday mornings can be one of the most satisfying and exciting days for any family. However, it can also be one of the most frustrating and draining days for parents who have a difficult time getting their teen to go to church. If your family finds itself in the second category, please understand you are NOT alone. When was the last time your family all agreed on where to eat, much less on where and what time everyone should attend church? To better understand the true significance of attending church, you must begin with the basic question, "Is attending church important?" The answer is an emphatic YES! God set up the church for worship and for community for God's

family. Read Acts 2:42-47 and see for yourself the "Church" in action. When we miss out on that, we miss out on a very important part of God's plan. So, if we agree on that point, then where does a family go from here? If your teen does not like going to church, begin by asking the simple question, "Why". When asking this question, you must then be willing to listen. Don't comment after every sentence or roll your eyes when a reason is given that seems ridiculous. Ask God to give you patience as you listen intently to their objections, frustrations, and concerns. After your teen is finished, begin talking about the reasons they gave and find a way to begin to actively address their concerns. For example, one of their reasons could be they don't feel a part of the group. Some suggestions you might give could be to allow them to bring a friend, or ask with a great amount of diplomacy if they are making an effort to meet other teens. You can also find an adult volunteer in the Student Ministry and ask what they have observed. The bottom line is that parents must be proactive in doing whatever is necessary to connect their teen to a church family. You have every right to force your teen and your family to attend church, but talking, listening, and problem solving allows your teen to no longer be the "problem" but to be a part of the solution instead.

Here are some additional tips on getting your teen connected to our church family:

- 1. Worship happens all week, not just at church.** Make it a point to talk about God during the week, not just on Sundays. That shows your family that God is about every day of the week, not just on Sunday.
- 2. Find a place of service for your teen.** There are MANY places in the church that need volunteers. Allow your teen to serve on Sunday morning. This will greatly increase the chance for your teen to feel connected and "needed" on Sunday mornings.
- 3. Find a place of service for YOU.** One of the best things a parent can do is get involved in the ministry your teen attends. NOTE: You don't have to be "cool" to work with students. You MUST have a heart for the Lord and a heart for people. The rest will come.
- 4. PRAY!** Please don't forget the power of prayer. God definitely wants your family to find a place to worship and connect with other Christians. This is a request He wants to answer. It might take time and a lot of work, BUT your labor will not be in vain!



What expectations do teens have about attending church?

- 45% - To worship or make a connection with God.
- 42% - To better understand what I believe
- 34% - To spend time with close friends
- 34% - To get encouraged or inspired
- 30% - To volunteer to help others.



What do teens learn from their experiences in church? (top four answers)

- 65% - Moral and ethical standards
- 62% - Relationships
- 55% - Faith traditions
- 50% - Personal evangelism

(barna.org)



The simple fact is the Church is very important to the life of anyone who follows Christ. The question is does your teen truly believe that? Here are some questions to find out what your teen believes about going to church and if he/she truly enjoys their experience.

1. Why do you think God gave us the Church and made such a big deal about it? Do you think it is important to go to church on a regular basis? Why or why not?
2. What are the top three things you like about going to church? What are some of things you don't really like about going to church?
3. In the past few weeks, tell me one or two things that you have learned at church?
4. Why do you think some of your friends at school don't attend church? What could our church and our student ministry do to get them to visit our church?

PRAY THAT:

1. Your teen will be open to listening to God's voice in giving direction in their life.
2. God will clearly reveal to your teen the priorities He wants for your teen.
3. God would put people in your teen's life to "connect" with at church and to influence them and encourage them to want to be involved in church.
4. You will model for your teen what it means to be "connected" in the body of Christ.

Verse of the month

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." Acts 2:42-46 (NIV)

These verses truly describe God's church in action. How many people would attend our church if our congregation reflected this example? As parents, begin now by teaching your teen the value and importance of worshipping, connecting with other Believers, giving to those in need, and serving God, our church, and this world. Only then will we see the Lord "adding to our number daily those who are being saved!"



*About one-half of all Protestant teens attend church weekly, participate in Sunday school or in a religious youth group, pray, and attend a religious summer camp or retreat, though less than one-third read the Bible each week. (youthandreligion.org)

*Twelve percent of protestant teens who attend religious services more than a few times a year say that church is usually boring. (youthandreligion.org)

*According to a Gallup Organization study, 51% of those born before 1946 attend church on a regular basis compared with only 29% of people born between 1977 and 1994. (i-newswire.com)



