

Pastor's Pen

Devoted!

"And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers." Acts 2:42

Occasionally, I will hear someone say, "I don't need to be a member of a church to be a Christian," or "I don't need to go to church every week. I can worship God in my deer stand, or on my boat, or in my living room". They are correct that you don't have to attend church to be a Christian. However, you are a disobedient one.

Peter had preached Christ and Him crucified in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Luke tells us in Acts that around 3,000 souls were saved after he preached (Acts 2:41). Don't miss this. Immediately after the 3,000 souls were saved, we are told, *"And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers."* They became the church.

Pastor Cal and I were talking this past Monday about this verse. He shared the following definition for the word devoted, "Being devoted to something means being focused on that particular thing almost exclusively." The Greek word carries the meaning of loyal, faithful, and true. The early Christians devoted themselves in four ways.

First, they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. In other words, they gathered to hear the Word of God preached. The local church is to be devoted to biblical doctrine and theology. God's under-shepherds, the pastors of the local church, are used by God to teach the flock. Sunday morning is for the sheep, not the goats. Paul, writing to Timothy, said, *"In pointing out these things to the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following (1 Tim.4:6)."*

Secondly, they devoted themselves to fellowship. The fellowship is to be with the local body of believers. [Chrisitan fellowship](#) is not the same as the world's definition of fellowship. The Christian fellowship has a unique perspective. The church gathers and is devoted to obeying the "one another's" commands.

There are over 48 of them. Here are just a few. We are to be devoted to one another and honor one another (Romans 12:10), instruct one another (Romans 15:14), be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32), encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11), and most importantly, love one another (1 John 3:11).

Thirdly, they devoted themselves to the breaking of bread. The primary purpose of breaking bread is to celebrate the Lord's supper. This is to be done with our brothers and sisters in Christ on Sunday mornings at our local church.

Fourthly, they devoted themselves to prayer. The local church is to be a place that promotes prayer, teaches prayer, and practices prayer. Paul wrote the church in Phillipi encourages us, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

John Macarthur said this about the early church, "The first fellowship knew the critical importance of pursuing spiritual duties. They knew the church must be made up of saved individuals devoted to studying the Word, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. Those elements are the unique expressions of the life of the church. They are the means of grace by which the church becomes what God wants it to be."

We are devoted to the apostle's teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer at Grace Harvest.

Your shepherd,
Pastor Mark

Quote of the Week

"To gather with God's people in united adoration of the Father is as necessary to the Christian life as prayer."
- Martin Luther

Grace Gems

Quotes on Church Attendance

"There was a dear sister, now in heaven, who attended this Tabernacle for years, though she was so deaf that she never heard a word that was spoken. The reasons she gave for being here were that, at any rate, she could join in the hymns, and that, had she stayed away, she would have felt as if she was disassociated from the people of God; and other people, perhaps, might not have known the reason for her absence, and it might, therefore, have been a bad example to them." ~ --Charles H. Spurgeon

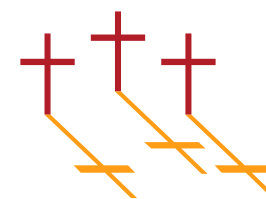
Objection: I can profit as much by staying at home and reading the Scripture or some good book; it is the word of God which they preach, and it is that which I read at home. The books that are written by learned men are better than the sermons that are preached by our ministers.

Answer: What foolish pretences are these against the plain command of God and our own necessary duty! When God hath appointed you your duty, will He allow you to forsake it upon your own reason, as if you were wiser than God, and knew what will profit you better than He? -Richard Baxter

"Nonattendance, in the early years of our church, was considered one of the most sinister of sins, because it usually veiled all the other sins. When someone began to be in sin, you would expect them to stop attending." - Mark Dever

"The man who attempts Christianity without the church shoots himself in the foot, shoots his children in the leg, and shoots his grandchildren in the heart." - Kevin DeYoung

"If I had never joined a church till I had found one that was perfect, I should never have joined one at all; and the moment I did join it, if I had found one, I should have spoiled it, for it would not have been a perfect church after I had become a member of it. Still, imperfect as it is, it is the dearest place on earth to us."
-Charles Spurgeon



Weekly Gatherings

Bible Classes

Old & New Testament Classes
Ladies Class
Young Adults Young Parents
Youth Surge
Sunday Morning @ 9:30AM

Weekday Meetings

Mondays | 7PM Men's Bible Study
1st and 3rd Saturday
Women of Grace | 9AM
Wednesdays | 6:30PM AWANA

Family Groups

Thursdays @ 7PM
Please check church website
for start date and directions to each

Build the Body Teams

If you would like to serve on a BtB Team
and need to sign up, please contact the
team leader at the appropriate email
address on the back of this bulletin.

Youth Study

Wednesdays @6:30PM
Youth Study & Surge!

Service Times

Sunday Services 8AM & 11:00AM
Sunday School 9:30AM
Children's Church @11:00AM

Giving from service on 10/08/2023

General Offering 10,7052.43
Building Fund 2,062.50
Uganda Missions 125.00

Total.....\$12,892.93
Attendance 228
Online.....29

Build the Body Ministries

Women's Ministry-women@ghbcva.org
AWANA-awana@ghbcva.org
Outreach Ministry-outreach@ghbcva.org
Worship Ministry-worship@ghbcva.org
Men's Ministry-men@ghbcva.org
Children's Ministry-children@ghbcva.org
Youth Ministry-youth@ghbcva.org
Prayer Team-prayer@ghbcva.org
Maintenance-maintenance@ghbcva.org
Fellowship-fellowship@ghbcva.org
Communications-communications@ghbcva.org
Front Line-frontline@ghbcva.org
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Grace Harvest Baptist Church

Oct 15, 2023

Welcome