

Trends

A 2018 survey of Americans asked: "How often do you do you attend church?"

☛ 22% "every week" ☛ 10% "almost every week"
☛ 11% "about once a month" ☛ 25% "seldom" ☛ 28% "never"

- via [Statista.com](https://www.statista.com)

Psalm 122:1: "I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the house of the LORD.'"

Sentence Sermons

"Church attendance is as vital to a disciple as a transfusion of rich, healthy blood to a sick man."

—Dwight L. Moody

Hebrews 10:24-25: "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."

News & Notes

Please pray for Mike Thomas and his family (Plainfield) and Kathy Lee's family (Michigan). Both recently lost loved ones.

Please pray for Zachary Wallace. He is not faithfully attending services as he should (Heb. 10:24-25). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please keep sister Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. She is an encouragement to all of us!

Pray for all our members who do not attend regularly. Try to encourage them!

Pray for all the lost souls, especially those in the greater Bloomington area. Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

There are many needy saints, including preachers! Can you help?!

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"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



What if Everyone in a Local Church Loved God (With Their Whole Heart?)

Fred Newman

Few causes will ally groups that are normally at odds with one another. However, Jesus was the catalyst that united two groups that were diametrically opposed to each other. This revolutionary teacher brought the Sadducees and Pharisees into a collusion to halt the progress of the movement which Jesus had initiated. After the Sadducees were silenced by His wisdom, the Pharisees stepped in and sent a lawyer (probably one of their best) to test Him. He asked, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great command." Jesus continued with a second command, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:34-40). Everything that God desires of people can be summed up in the statement, "Love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, and mind." Everything that He wants man to do in his relationship with his fellow human beings is encapsulated in the command, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

What is the result when an individual loves God with their entire being? How does this love manifest itself in the life of this person? The simple answer is that whoever loves God with their whole heart, soul and mind will display a voracious desire to please Him. Just as a doctor looks for symptoms of a particular illness that cannot be seen with the eye, one can examine the lives of others, as well as their own, in order to identify those individuals who possess such love in their hearts.

Those who possess this whole-hearted love for God will mimic His dispositions and attitudes in their lives. Just as God loves all individuals and seeks their well-being, the individual whose heart is filled with this love will do the same. God even loves those who are His enemies, and so will the person who has the love of God in their heart. Integrity, justice, mercy, and for-

givenness are some of the traits that will characterize the attitudes of those who love God with their entire being.

People who wholly love God will abhor evil (Romans 12:9). These individuals will abstain from sinful behavior due to the attitude that they have toward evil. The one whose heart is inclined to God hates evil. The psalmist wrote, *"You who love the LORD, hate evil..."* (Psalm 97:10). The purer one's love for God, the less allurements temptation and sin will have in the life of that individual.

Another trait which will be displayed in the life of one who loves God with their entire being is the yielding of their will to His. This person's life will be characterized by obedience to His commandments. Jesus said, *"If you love Me, keep My commandments"* (John 14:15).

What would be the result if every member within a local family of God shared this of type love? Can you imagine the tremendous impact this would have both within and outside of the body? It would obviously lead to harmony within that body. The members of that congregation would possess true love and concern for one another. Peter expressed this thought, *"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart"* (1 Peter 1:22). They would do every-

"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 13:35

thing within their power to lift up those who were facing trials, illnesses, and challenges in their lives. If this love existed in each individual, nothing would be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind each person would esteem others better than himself. Other's interest would be placed on an equal level or ahead of one's personal well-being (Philippians 2:3-4). The Holy Spirit admonished, *"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works"* (Hebrews 10:24 NKJV). *"Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!"* (Psalm 133:1). Our Lord drew this conclusion, *"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another"* (John 13:35).

If every member of a local body had this depth of love for God, the message of Jesus Christ would be heralded throughout that community and beyond. Those members would possess a zeal for the gospel that could not be quenched by the opposition of the world or by rejection of the gospel by those who hear. This group of Christians would be a beacon shining brightly in a dark and stormy world.

One might ask, "Is it possible for such a congregation to exist?" "Is it conceivable that every member in a local family of God would possess such love and devotion to their Creation and Savior?" The an-

swer is, "Yes." However, it is only possible if YOU and I develop and maintain this kind of love in our hearts. Will YOU do your part?

For a Quarter

Author unknown

Several years ago, a preacher moved to Houston, Texas. Some weeks after he arrived, he had occasion to ride the bus from his home to the downtown area. When he sat down, he discovered that the driver had accidentally given him a quarter too much change.

As he considered what to do, he thought to himself, "you better give the quarter back. It would be wrong to keep it." Then he thought, "Oh, forget about it, it's only a quarter. Who would worry about this little amount? Anyway, the bus company gets too much fare, they will never miss it. Accept it as a gift from God and keep quiet."

"Provide things honest in the sight of all men."

Roman 12:17

When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the door, then he handed the quarter to the driver and said, "Here, you gave me too much change." The driver with a smile replied, "Aren't you the new preacher in town? I have been thinking lately about going to worship somewhere. I just wanted to see what you would do if I gave you too much change. I'll see you at church on Sunday."

When the preacher stepped off the bus, he literally grabbed the nearest light pole, held on, and said, "O' God, I almost sold your Son for a quarter."

OUR LIVES ARE THE ONLY BIBLE SOME PEOPLE WILL EVER READ.

You Finish This Story . . .

There was once a congregation in which every member was just like you. Each one cooperated and supported every phase of the work just like you. Everyone worked as hard and attended the same services and gospel meetings that you did. The elders, deacons, and preachers were all as interested in the church as you are. They put the same emphasis on recreation, business, and other material affairs that you do. Each member contributed monetarily just like you do. **Within a year or so, this congregation . . .**

"...the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."

Ephesians 4:16