

# Christian Atheist: "I Believe in God, but I Don't Go to Church"

## I Corinthians 1:27 +10 more passages

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8/28/22

### Discussion Guide

#### Preparation

Begin the meeting by talking about your experiences with the Church. What were your impressions of church before you became a Christian? What were your impressions after you became a Christian? Was worship attendance something that automatically happened after you made a Christian commitment or did it take time to convince you of its importance?

#### Today's Text

*"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."* I Corinthians 12:27

1. Was there a time you stopped going to church? What happened? Are you active in a local church today? If so, what brought you back to the church? If not, why aren't you active in a local church?
2. Pastor Richard mentioned six reasons why people do not go or belong to a local church. Which ones have you heard most frequent? Brainstorm potential responses to these reasons that may help draw back a person who is currently estranged from the Church.  
  
Don't limit responses to verbal responses. For some people, there is nothing you can say that will bring them back to the church but there may be somethings you can do!
3. Debate this statement: *"I don't think you have to attend church in order to be a Christian."*
4. Can you be a better Christian without the Church, than you can be with the Church?
5. Do you think most churches are too legalistic or too leisurely when it comes to church attendance? What about church membership, do we make it too hard to join a local church or too easy? What are the pros and cons of each?
6. Have you met anyone who thought they were too "spiritual" for the local church? How do you handle these people?
7. Have you attended a church that made you feel worse about yourself after you left the worship service?
8. Has the Church struck the right balance between grace and truth or do we tend to emphasize one too much at the expense of the other?

Jesus and the Apostle Paul were remarkable in balancing these two. Look at John 8:1-11 and 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 and discuss them.

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9. Respond to the statement. *"As Christians we are not called to go to church but to be the church."* Do you think most Christians view the Church that way? What would change if we did?
10. Jesus' love was incarnational love: *"He dwelt among us."* John 1:14. How have you experienced Christ's incarnational love through the Church?
11. Read Romans 12:9-17. Which ones come natural to you and which ones don't?
12. Think about Jesus' commitment to the Church of his day. It met weekly at the local synagogue and for the high holidays at the Temple in Jerusalem. Talk about corrupt leaders, hypocrites, church conflict, and "unbiblical." Yet, Jesus *"on the Sabbath day went into the synagogue, as was his custom."* Luke 4:16 Jesus never stopped going to church.  
  
What he did do was remain in it until he was able to effect the change he wanted. What would happen if every believer had that kind of commitment to their church?
13. If you could change one thing about the Church, what would it be? (By Church I mean large "C" Church, the universal Church)? What would you change at FPC?
14. Read Acts 2:42-46. How can we create that kind of warm, attractive, inviting fellowship? I think that's something we all want.
15. Share ways the local church has been instrumental in your spiritual growth. Do you think you'd be as strong or mature in your faith had you not been part of a local church?
16. Describe the family you grew up in, in relationship to faith. Did you grow up in a Christian home, quasi-Christian home or in a secular home? What did your parents teach you about God or Christianity? If you grew up in a Christian home, did your parents take their faith into the home and have spiritual conversations with you? What spiritual practices occurred in your home?
17. Share a story when you saw the Church at its best.

End by praying for your local church and what role God wants you to play in it. What is your gift that he wants you to use? What ministry does he want you to start or participate in?