

CONFESSIONS OF A FORMER REGULAR CHURCH ATTENDER

Awhile back, this article was put out by **Group**, the church resource company, through a branch of it called **Refresh the Church**. In it, the author, Rick Chromey, shares his conversations with former regular church attenders who now prefer to stay at home. He says that most of these folks continue to remain active in their faith through small groups, recovery ministries, church social events, concerts and religious radio and television programs, but they have stopped attending church. I thought their reasons for not attending church would be interesting and helpful to you.

Reason #1: They can watch the worship services at home. They don't have to get up, get cleaned up, dressed up, or drive to church. They can do their own spiritually-nourishing activities on their own time, like Bible study, prayer and journaling, and then watch the service online whenever. This, they

say, *sort of* provides them with a feeling of connectedness with the church, which they get without actually going.

Reason #2: Spiritual “community” at their churches became absent. Their churches were large enough that they often missed seeing their friends each week, so their fellowship with them became hit or miss.

Reason #3: The “church experience” changed from a community-driven one to a performance-driven one. The worship services became like attending a show. “We attend the show, view the back of someone’s head, and go home. Apparently, people don’t go to church to really worship, or to make friends anymore.”

Reason #4: Pastoral friendship changed. Some of these folks particularly wanted to connect with their pastors – but the pastors had become too busy with their other leadership responsibilities to build relationships with them.

Reason #5: Their biggest reason was that no one from their church (including the pastor and deacons) had emailed, visited or called them to find out how they were, or why they had stopped attending, so they concluded that *no one cared whether they were there or not*. “Church used to be about connection. We used to care more about the prodigals, the left out, the hurting and the absent than we do now,” they said. In short, these folks felt

disconnected and forgotten, which also left them with the feeling that going to church was a waste of time and energy.

Reason #6: The above attitude and their infrequent attendance fostered feelings of guilt and shame, which made them not want to attend all the more.

What might we do with this information? Here are some of my thoughts:

1. Never underestimate the importance of genuine friendliness, hospitality and inclusion. This is absolutely *our forte*, but we need to keep on introducing ourselves and striking up conversations with those we don’t know, or don’t know well. But, let’s not stop there. Let’s keep inviting folks into our homes and to our JOY groups (*see the article*). Let’s invite them to our church social events – and of course, let’s invite them to church.

2. Please help me to know you better. I’d love to meet you for a meal. I hope you will call me if you want to talk or need a prayer. I’d be glad to help you start a small group in your home or neighborhood. I want to be available to you, as do our deacons.

3. Help me to know what is most helpful, and least helpful to you, regarding our worship services. Rob and I welcome your feedback and your involvement in worship leadership. Please let us know if you would like to pray, do a solo, read scripture or lead in another way – and consider joining the choir!

4. Please be generous with your presence by your regular attendance at church events, and especially worship, whenever possible.

(continued from “Confessions of a Former Regular Church Attender”)

We continue to consider whether we should be posting our services online because we realize that being physically together regularly is of such importance that we don't want to give folks a reason *not* to attend worship. Be assured that you are missed when you aren't here, and that a great ministry we can all provide is our own presence in worship!

5. Don't let guilt over infrequent attendance keep you from being present for worship or other gatherings. No one wants that. *Just know that you are very wanted and missed.*

Do you have other thoughts? Please share them with me!

So grateful to be your pastor! Susan

WEEKLY CHURCH EVENTS

WEEKLY COMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY

Wednesdays, August 5, 12, 19 and 26 from 11:00 to noon in the pastor's office. Come join us! We are studying the gospel of Luke. Invite your friends! There's always room for more.

WEEKLY CHOIR REHEARSAL

Wednesdays, August 12, 19, and 26 at 5:30 p.m. in the choir room. There will not be a choir practice on August 5 as Rob will be on vacation.

REGULAR MONTHLY EVENTS

PICKER'S & FIDDLER'S MUSIC FEST

Saturday, August 8 from 10:00 to noon in the fellowship hall (and every 2nd Saturday of the month). We have our own Grand Ole' Opry right here in Bassett! Come and hear many wonderfully talented people share their musical gifts free of charge. It is a wonderful time! Invite your friends. Bring your instrument and play/sing too! And every month we'll be giving away one of Linda Bullock's homemade cakes!

DEACONS' MEETING

Tuesday, August 18 at 7:00 p.m. in the conference room.

COMMUNITY MEAL

Thursday, August 20 at 5:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall (and every 3rd Thursday of the month). All are welcome to come and help serve, eat, and fellowship with our neighbors of Martinsville, Henry County and Bassett. Workers should arrive at 5:45. If you would like to contribute a dessert, contact Lindy Koger at 276-734-2096.

FEED AMERICA FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Tuesday, August 25 at the Light Electric Building, 24A Governor Stanley Hwy, 12:30 – 1:30. There is also a worship service beforehand, at 9:00 a.m. and a lunch, free of charge, is offered at 11:30 a.m. at the same place. All are welcome!

SPECIAL EVENTS THIS MONTH

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

Friday, August 14 on the tarmac next to our picnic shelter. Sunset will be at 8:39 so the movie will begin shortly after that. We'll have a family-approved movie, popcorn and drinks. Bring your own lawn chair or camping chair and invite your friends!

LUNCH AT THE HOMEPLACE

Saturday, August 22. Meet at the church at 9:30 a.m. The Homeplace is a popular family-style restaurant in Catawba, VA (near Roanoke). For one price, an all-you-can-eat meal of Southern-style comfort foods featuring three kinds of meat, several sides and desserts, is served at your table. Cost is \$20-\$30 each. We are going for lunch because lunch time is less busy. Please sign up with Robert Coleman or Graves Anthony.

CHILDREN'S SABBATH

Sunday, August 23 at 11:00 a.m. in the sanctuary. On this Sunday we will especially celebrate the children of the church and the daycare. The children will take some of the leadership roles and sing some songs they have learned in our weekly chapel time. We will also take special time for our children's message. We are hopeful that all of the families of our daycare children will be able to worship with us on this day. Please make it a priority to come!

NEWS AND UPDATES

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR THE FALL

SEPTEMBER 5: BASSETT HERITAGE FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 6: CBF MISSIONS MOMENT

SEPTEMBER 13: ALMA HUNT STATE MISSIONS OFFERING INGATHERING

SEPTEMBER 18: FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

SEPTEMBER 21: RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

OCTOBER 4: BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS SERVICE

OCTOBER 11: STEWARDSHIP BANQUET

OCTOBER 18: ALL MUSIC SUNDAY

OCTOBER 24: CHURCH PICNIC

OCTOBER 25: QUARTERLY CHURCH BUSINESS MTG. WITH LUNCH

OCTOBER 31: TRUNK O' TREATS

SCHOOL SUPPLY COLLECTION

We will soon begin collecting school supplies for Campbell Court Elementary School. You will find a box in the church foyer for your donated items. Along with all the usual supplies you might think of, you might also consider providing boxes of tissues, glue sticks, scissors, and packages of socks and underwear in various sizes for either boys or girls. Teachers also need dry erase markers and folders. We will be taking what we have

collected to CCES some time after school starts on Tuesday, August 11. Thank you!

JOY GROUPS "SHUFFLED"

We began our fellowship groups known as J.O.Y. Groups about three years ago and have decided it's time to shuffle them. Here are the new assignments. If you cannot participate, please let Pastor Susan or someone in your newly assigned group know. Also, if you would like to participate but do not find your name below – ***our apologies!*** Please let our Administrative Assistant, Freda Collier, know, or Pastor Susan, and we will add you ASAP! **All are absolutely welcome!**

J.O.Y. Groups strive to meet somewhere between once a month to 2 - 3 times a quarter. They gather for meals, whether in the form of a picnic, a potluck in a park, home or at church, or in a restaurant. At each gathering, a person takes responsibility for choosing the meal and setting for the next gathering, and for contacting the group.

J.O.Y. Groups have 3 purposes:

1. to strengthen our present fellowship
2. to have a way to invite new folks into an informal setting where we can get to know them and vice-versa
3. to open our church to other opportunities for ministry such as providing a neighborhood Bible study etc.

JOY GROUP ASSIGNMENTS (Please note: Some of these have not previously participated but may be able to now.)

GROUP A

Charles & Donna Anthony
Frank & Linda Bullock
Pat Foster & Brenda Bolen
Barry France
Jean Garvin
Ronnie & Lindy Koger
Ashley & Decklynn Mundy
Mark Philpott
Al & Judy Raborn
Benny, Jane & Melissa Sharpe
Randal, Bridget, Aubrie, Raymond & Georgia Tickle

GROUP B

Bobby Alderman
Graves Anthony
Matt & Leigh Ann Bart
Carlton Craig
Alan & Jojo Lawson
Jim & Cordie Philpott
Pat & Tina Sharpe
Danny, Mary Grace, Selah, Natty & Johanna Sileo
Kim Terrill
Jane & Mark Young
Ken & Donna Ziglar

GROUP C

Bruce Alderman
Wills Clark
Robert & Jackie Coleman
Richie & Mary Colledge
Mary Alice Ferguson
Darryl & Pam Martin
Judith Parady
Keith & Susan Spangenberg
Al & Darryl Spencer
Gary, Saray, Lexi, Kenzie & Silas Taylor
Merle White

**FROM LITTLE ANGELS EARLY
LEARNING CENTER**

MUSIC NOTES