

Bite Size Bible Study

What vs. Why #152

By Pastor Lee

I have been thinking a lot lately about why church attendance is diminishing throughout parts the Christian world. The standard answers I find are: "people's lives are just too busy to go to church", "there are too many other more interesting things to do", "the church is out of time and not relevant to today's busy lifestyles", "It's too organized", "I don't feel welcome", "I don't see any benefit to the fellowship".

While these answers may placate some, they are inadequate for my thinking. My experience is that people will find the time to do the things that they enjoy and feel is useful in their lives.

Even among those that do attend a church, how many enjoy the time, or are they just paying for "fire insurance"? It would be interesting to contemplate the reasons people attend a church; what benefit comes from the attendance? Every answer would be different.

Does church attendance affect their lives the rest of the week or is it just an activity on the weekend? For some it may be a recharging of their spiritual batteries.

Why is it that when we try to invite someone to church they rarely take us up on the invitation?

We are preparing to go out into the community and share with them just how much Jesus loves them. Are we going to inspire them, or irritate them and turn them further away from living the life God wants for them?

Our approach will determine the answer.

We might tell them that we have a beautiful facility to meet in, or our choir sings beautifully, or maybe we would say that our pastor is a great speaker. Every congregation on the planet could say the same thing.

These are all great but it is not telling why we are a church, it is telling them **what** the church is. It's about things not beliefs. Why should they believe we are different?

Every single religious organization on the planet knows what they do and what they have. Very few people in those organizations know **why** they do what they do, and those on the outside have even less understanding.

**People don't buy into what you have;
they buy into what you believe.**

What is our belief? Why does our organization exist? What is our purpose? Why do we get out of bed in the morning? And why should anyone else care?

All the great inspiring leaders in the world, think, act and communicate the exact same way. They communicate what they believe, not what they have.

Our goal is not to sell to people who need what we have; Our goal is to sell to people who can believe what we believe – that Jesus is the answer that we believe in.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Mat 28:18-20 NIV

Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission to go to all nations and peoples to teach them the principles He had been teaching and demonstrating to them. It is our commission, as His disciples in this age, to follow that same instruction, by teaching those in our community these principles. We can only interest them if we live by those principles and show people what we believe.

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Listen to politicians, salesmen and preachers, with their comprehensive 12-point plans. They cannot inspire very many with their plans and projects. Only by telling them what they believe in will they find people interested in believing the same way.

There are leaders and there are those who lead. Leaders hold a position of power or authority. Those who lead – inspire us. Whether they're individuals or organizations, we follow those who lead, not because we have to, but because we want to; and we believe in what they believe in. We follow those who lead, not for them, but for ourselves. And it's those who start with "why", that have the ability to inspire those around them.

Maybe when we speak to someone, we should be telling them that **we believe** . . .

That will be different for each of us and only prayer (our relationship with God), Bible Study (listening to what He has written for us) and the Holy Spirit will we be able to fulfill the Great Commission within our community.

Reference: Ted Talks: Simon Sinek "How Great Leaders Inspire Action"

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