**Being A Christian Means Showing Up**

Earlier I wrote that being a Christian requires commitment. Bearing the cross is a daily activity. In this article we will look at what it means to “show up” as a Christian.

To some religion is best practiced by proxy. Proxy meaning, 1. the agency, function, or power of a person authorized to act as the deputy or substitute for another. 2.the person so authorized; substitute; agent. (Dictionary.com) Basically it means you do not have to show up, instead you have someone else do your duty. To many of folks being a Christian means “going to church” on special occasions, when it is convent, and feeling satisfied with such limited service.

I know some are thinking at this juncture of reading, I am talking about attending worship services. You are partly right as assembling with the saints is commanded, “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.” Hebrews 10:25) Physically we are to assemble with our brethren in order fulfill our obligations to them and the Lord. “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,” (Hebrews 10:24) Our presence means it is important to us, we have prepared ourselves to worship God as prescribed in John 4.24. It means we have placed God first and want to glorify Him. It also means we want to help others worship and serve God. Our absence may be due to events beyond our control, i.e., health issues, being “providentially hindered”, providing for our families in which case we will not allow our absence to become habit forming. Forsaking the assembling of the saints together means it is not really important to us. Whether it is some recreational or social activity or apathy, it shows we are choosing to not show up.

The church of the first century came together to observe the Lord’s Supper. “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread.” (Acts 20:7a) This day is specifically designed by God as the time this memorial is to be observed. It is also on the first day of the week, in the assembly, when the saints at Corinth were instructed to give monetarily for the work of the church in benevolence. “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.” (1 Corinthians 16:1-2) We sing together, pray together, and learn together. Such cannot be performed by proxy.

In all my years of being a Christian I have noticed a common pattern toward spiritual weakness and eventually falling away from the Lord. Beginning with sporadic attendance which advances to occasionally making it to services, which results in spiritual weakness. Eventually, such a person quits coming at all or so sporadically, it is truly a “special occasion”. I have never seen a Christian grow and become stronger who regularly missed worship services.

However, Christianity is not limited to just the church building. We are to show up outside the building for our families. Husbands are to be there for their wives and wives for their husbands. Words such as nourish, cherish, love, and respect are used in Ephesians 5 when speaking of the parallel between husband/wife and Christ/church. “24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,” “28 So, husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.” Ephesians 5.24-25, 28-32) Christians show up in their marriage.

They show up for their children. Perhaps many of our nation’s ills would be cured if moms and dads were more involved in their children’s lives. If they brought them to church in order to learn about God. If they brought their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Ephesians 6.4. At one time I saw fathers who were AWOL in their homes but now I see moms also absent without leave.

Finally, Christians should be different from the world. Jesus said His disciples will be the salt and light of the world. "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:13-16) Let us stand up for our convictions and not blend into the world. Let us cast the spotlight upon God in our lives.

Therefore, I say being a Christian means “show up”. Dennis Tucker