

👉 How To Get The Most Out Of Church

Last Sunday on the way to visit a church... “Lord, speak to me. Help me to hear your voice. Work in me today.”

We went to an independent church where we didn't know anybody, we didn't know any of the songs, and we didn't know the typical order of service. The preaching style was different than what we're accustomed to. Yet, we were able to worship God and be encouraged. So, I thought about how we all can get the most out of church.

Some almost always think the church service is a great thing; others almost always find something to complain about; and most are somewhere in between... getting some good out of the service and finding some flaws all at the same time. Your leaders are always working hard to have the best Celebration possible, but we are flawed human beings and don't score a perfect 10 every time. So, how can we all get the most out of church no matter what? Well, let's begin with some surefire ways to never get much out of church. Here are 10 ways to guarantee your unhappiness in any situation, including church:

Ten Ways to Be Unhappy

by Neil Eskelin

1. Make little things bother you. Don't just let them, make them.
2. Lose your perspective on things and keep it lost: don't put first things first.
3. Find yourself a good worry, one about which you cannot do anything.
4. Be a perfectionist, which means not that you work hard to do your best, but that you condemn yourself and others for not achieving perfection.
5. Be right. Be always right. Be the only one who is always right, and be rigid in your rightness.
6. Don't trust or believe people, or accept them at anything but their worst and weakest.
7. Be suspicious. Insist that others always have hidden motives.
8. Always compare yourself unfavorably to others. This guarantees instant misery.
9. Take personally everything that happens to you.
10. Don't give yourself whole-heartedly to anyone or anything.

Now, let's talk about what can really work. I searched online and actually found a number of blogs talking about this with some very helpful suggestions. Here's just a few:

👉 **Realize that no church is perfect.** *Sounds like an easy out to stop attending church. So, begin by going to church regularly. You will get 100% more out of church if you go than if you don't go.*

☞ Decide to **pray regularly for the staff and church**. God may surprise you with a deep love and appreciation for your church as you learn to pray for it.

Bring some friends along with you next time you attend. When you invite you're able to ☞ see church through fresh eyes. **Invite your neighbors and family** to join you. You'll feel proud when someone you care about joins you at church and your love for the church will grow.

If you really want to get something out of church don't just sit and soak. Give back. ☞ **Serving** is a great way to meet others, discover your gifts, honor Jesus, and be reminded of the beautiful diversity of God's people.

☞ Regardless if you enjoy the pastor's teaching style, **pay attention** to the message, then follow up with personal study or reflection. You don't really learn unless you change your behavior. It doesn't do you any good unless you do something with what you are taught.

Become a financial investor in the church. If you believe in the mission, then be a part of ☞ funding it. We believe that you'll grow to love the places where you **invest your money**.

☞ **Be gracious**. When we're more worried about getting something we want out of our church, we tend to be critical about how things at that church operate. This Sunday—(and every Sunday)—choose to not be critical about the music, or the way the pastor dresses, or the way someone lifts their hands, or whatever. Choose to be gracious, knowing that the church is filled with fallible people just like you.

☞ **Be an encourager**. Who can you encourage when you interact with your church family? Let me tell you something you may not realize. When you are friendly and an encouragement to your church staff, it's a BIG deal.

☞ Approach the day with **humility**, realizing that no matter how long you've been a Christian, no matter how much Christ has changed you, no matter how much you know, you've still got an infinitely long journey ahead before you are made like Christ. Also remember that everyone around you is on the same road, and they might just be looking for a helping hand from you.

Now, here are my thoughts based on the Bible:

☞ **Come to Church Expecting to hear from God**

Matthew 7:7-8

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. **8** For everyone who asks receives; **he who seeks finds**; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

You will find what you're looking for. Looking for faults and flaws? You'll find them. Looking for friends? You can find them. Looking for the Father? You will find him. Listen to these biblical attitudes:

Psalms 122:1

I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

Psalms 42:1-2

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. **2** My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

A young psychology student serving in the Army decided to test a theory. Drawing kitchen duty, he was given the job of passing out apricots at the end of the chow line. He asked the first few soldiers that came by, "You don't want any apricots, do you?" Ninety percent said "No." Then he tried the positive approach: "You do want apricots, don't you?" About half answered, "Uh, yeah. I'll take some." Then he tried a third test, based on the fundamental either/or selling technique. This time he asked, "One dish of apricots or two?" And in spite of the fact that soldiers don't like Army apricots, 40 percent took two dishes and 50 percent took one! (How much of God do you want this week?)

John 10:2-3

The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. **3** The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep **listen to his voice**.

God speaks to those who have time to listen.

Be prepared. Read and pray regularly between Sundays, knowing that the sermon you hear on Sunday is not some spiritual vitamin meant to somehow get you through the week. Scripture was given to us by God to be woven into our lives and have an impact on every thought, act, and decision. Prepare yourself throughout the week for service on Sunday by applying the Word on the days in between.

Come to Church to Exalt Christ wholeheartedly

Psalms 100:1-2, 4

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. 2 Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

--J.I. Packer...*To worship God is to recognize his worth or worthiness; to look God-ward, and to acknowledge in all appropriate ways the value of what we see. The Bible calls this activity "glorifying God" or "giving glory to God," and views it as the ultimate end, and from one point of view, the whole duty of man (Ps. 29:2; 96:6; 1 Cor. 10:31).*

Psalms 34:1-3

I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. 2 My soul will boast in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. 3 **Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together.**

How should we praise God?

Psalm 86:12 says *I will praise you... with all my heart.*

Psalm 26:6-7 says *out loud.*

Psalm 134:2 mentions *with lifted hands.*

Psalm 150 includes *with instruments and dancing.*

Psalm 95:1-7 mentions *singing, shouting, thanksgiving, music, & kneeling.*

So often, we're focused on ourselves or we're focused on the people around us rather than being focused on God...

Deeply immersed in meditation during a church service, Italian poet Dante Alighieri failed to kneel at the appropriate moment. His enemies hurried to the bishop and demanded that Dante be punished for his sacrilege. Dante defended himself by saying, "If those who accuse me had had their eyes and minds on God, as I had, they too would have failed to notice events around them, and they most certainly would not have noticed what I was doing."

I remember as a kid, noticing that my sister didn't close her eyes during prayer... What is instantly revealed about me?

Colossians 3:1-2

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 **Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.**

Psalms 145:1-3

I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. **2** Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. **3** Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.

☞ **Come to Church to Encourage others**

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

--William Arthur Ward... Flatter me, and I may not believe you. Criticize me, and I may not like you. Ignore me, and I may not forgive you. Encourage me, and I will not forget you.

Proverbs 11:25

☞ **He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.**

Acts 20:35

remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Here is a great truth. When you focus on encouraging and helping others, you, yourself, will be encouraged. It's when you are constantly waiting for someone else to reach out to you that you become discouraged. You take the initiative! You be the encourager!

Everyone needs recognition for his accomplishments, but few people make the need known quite as clearly as the little boy who said to his father: "Let's play darts. I'll throw and you say 'Wonderful!'"

Ephesians 4:29

☞ Do not let any **unwholesome talk** come out of your mouths, but **only what is helpful** for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Work on building real relationships with others at church. You may never get to know everyone, but you should start building real friendships and strong bonds with at least some of your fellow members. These are the people who will not only help you bear your burdens, but will also need you to come alongside them and support them through the ups and downs of life.

Hebrews 3:13

encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

☞ Go from Church to Employ what you received

James 1:22

☞ Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says.**

John 13:17

Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Be open to change. At the center of Christ's work on the cross is the reality of radical change. If you're a believer in Christ, somewhere along the way you were made to realize your deep need for Christ and the kind of life only He can offer. This life is one of change as we become less like who we were yesterday and more like Him.

Employ what you receive. Do what it says. Let the Lord change you.

1 John 2:3

☞ We know that we have come to know him if we **obey his commands.**

Remember, church is not about us. It's first and foremost about our relationship with Christ as we strive daily to become more like the Savior. It's secondly about how we can love one another in many different capacities—from sharing the Gospel and building great relationships to feeding the poor and hungry and caring for widows and orphans.

I believe we have one of the best churches in the area. We stick to the Bible and work to live by the truth. We welcome the Spirit of God to move in us. We have a great multipurpose building, great music, great small groups, great kids and youth programs, and on and on. We have a lot of good people who help make this church great. Will you join me in working to make this church even greater?

My prayer is that you choose to do more than just attend church. My hope is that you will become a fully-engaged member of the church and contribute to make it even more vibrant than it already is.

☞ How can you get the most out of church? **Expect; Exalt; Encourage; Employ**

Now, employ what you have received. Before next Sunday, prepare yourself and come Expecting to hear from God. Come with a plan to Exalt Christ wholeheartedly no matter what. But today, right now, Encourage someone before you go.

