



[4:54] 50% never go to Sunday school. In the American context, it's meaning Bible teaching. 50%. 60% never go to church on Sunday night. So you've got the 40% here tonight.

70% never give to missions. 80% never go to the prayer meeting. 90% never have family worship. And 95% have never won a song to Christ.

These are the tragic statistics of a lukewarm church. These are statistics someone has gathered. Tragic statistics. Church going is just one reflection of that decline.

And it's a sad thing. So why bother with church, we could ask. Why does it matter? Because God counts it as important. God says it's important.

God commands us to fellowship. And it's a great privilege too. It's something that's not really an irksome thing. But we want to be with God's people. We want to be where we can be encouraged and hear God's word and learn and grow as a Christian.

[6:02] And with a responsibility. It's not just a passive receiving thing. There's a contributing aspect to church. There's a contributing aspect. As we all have a responsibility.

One to another. One to another. And to the Lord. We are commanded to fellowship. Let us consider one another to love and to good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the man of some is.

But exhorting one another. And so much the more as you see the day approaching. You know I read of a dread condition that afflicts many Christians.

And I want to warn you of this. You might have heard of it before. It's called Morbus Sabbaticus. Morbus Sabbaticus. In other words Sunday sickness. It's a disease peculiar to some church members.

And the symptoms vary. But are generally observed and never last more than 24 hours. Only happens on a Sunday. These symptoms never interfere with appetite.

[7:06] Nor affect the eyes. The Sunday paper can be read. With no pain. TV seems to help the eyes. No doctor is ever called. The patient begins to improve almost immediately.

After the services start. No symptoms are usually felt on Sunday. The patient sleeps well. And waits feeling well. He eats a hearty Sunday breakfast.

But then the attack comes. The attack comes and lasts until the services are over for the morning. The patient then feels better. And the problem seems to go far away.

The patient feels better. And eats a solid dinner. And after dinner he takes a nap. Then watches one or two pro football games on TV. Or Aussie rules. Or whatever it might be.

He may go fishing or work in his yard. And he feels well enough to do what he pleases. He may even take a walk before supper. And stop and chat with neighbours. And if there are church services scheduled for Sunday evenings.

[8:06] He'll likely have a relapse. About an hour before the service time. A relapse happens. But then invariably he will wake up on Monday morning. And rush off to work.

With no ill effects from the attack the day before. The symptoms will surely appear again. The afternoon of the midweek service. And probably the following Sunday as well.

And after a few of these attacks. At weekly intervals. The disease seems to become chronic. It becomes worse and worse. And for some even terminal.

Some are so affected. That they quit going to church altogether. The only cure for Morbus Semanticus.

Is to first repent. Of the sin of unfaithfulness. And disobedience to Christ's commands. You see it is a sin and disobedience. To misfellowship.

[9:01] Really for. I'm not putting people under a yoke here. But there is that aspect isn't there. It's not something that's honouring to God. And of course there are valid reasons.

That we may not always be able to make church. I know that. Please don't misunderstand. This is purely tongue in cheek. But it's a stirring.

A stirring to consider. What do we consider important? One thing we should consider. Is consider one another. God says consider one another.

That's why church is important. Because we consider one another. To provoke. To love. And to good works. Because we can exhort one another. In other words we can challenge. And warn one another. And stir one another in a good way. Exhort. It means to speak a word of warning. A word of cheer. A word of encouragement.

[9:58] Exhorting one another. Why? Because there's a day approaching. So much the more. Because there's a day approaching. In other words. The day of the Lord. The day of judgment.

The day of accounting. We need to be ready. We need to be so much the more. Fellowshiping. As we see the day approaching. There's all the more reason. Why we should fellowship.

All the more. To obey this verse. We need to fellowship. So what does a biblical church look like? What will mark a biblical church?

There's many good reasons. Why it matters. And why fellowship is good for us. A biblical church will be marked by. A provoking unto love. And to good works.

When describing the church of Acts. In the book of Acts. It says that the church was marked by. One accord. One accord. In Acts 1 verse 14.

[10:55] This one accordness was something that happened quite a bit through the book of Acts. You see. One accord. In Acts 1 verse 14. They were praying. And these all continued.

With one accord. In prayer. And supplication. With the women. And Mary. The mother of Jesus. And with his brethren. Now this word supplication. It means when we come to God. And we ask him to supply.

Our need. Just in simple terms. Supplication. Supplication. Means when we come to God. And we ask him. To supply our need. Supplication. When we've got a need.

We can ask God to supply the need. It's called supplication. And these all continued. With one accord. In prayer. And supplication. They knew that it was important.

To pray together. And to ask God to. Meet their need. Together. They prayed. In one accord. And in Acts 4 verse 24. It says they. Lifted up their voice to God.

[11:50] With one accord. And they prayed again. Lord. They are God. Which made heaven. And earth. And the sea. And all that in them is. There was one accord.

In their praying. As they glorified God. As they gave him praise. In Acts 4 verse 32. It says again. The multitude of them. That believed. Were of one heart. And of one soul.

And the context there. Is of giving. They had a need. There was some. Other. Church. Another. Assembly of God's people. That was in need.

And they gathered to. Help raise. A contribution. For the other church. That was in need. And that's what we do. When we gather. There's needs. We give.

We care. We praise. We pray. In one accord. That marks a biblical church. We see. The same sentiment. In. Romans 15. Verses 5 through 6.

[12:45] It says. Now the God of patience. And consolation. Grant you to be like minded. One toward another. According to Christ Jesus. That you may with. One mind.

And one mouth. Glorify God. Even the Father. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. There's one. Something wonderful. When God's people get together. Even if you just pray. With one other.

You know. As you gather together. As more than one. As two or three are gathered. Doesn't have to be a big number. But as you with one mind. And one mouth. Glorify God. There's a one accordness.

That's very precious. And wonderful. I've got. A whole. Stack of one another's here. That we'll hand out. At the close of the service. One another's.

We'll get to that. There's something. Beautiful. When God's people get together. Because it's about. One another. Have we that godly. Biblical desire. For fellowship.

[13:38] It's something that. God. Prompts in us. He provokes it in us. See. We need to fellowship. It's something innate. A desire that we have. As God's people. As God's children.

To get together. With our brothers and sisters. And a biblical church. Is a sanctuary. It's like a kind of sanctuary. That's what. Someone was reflecting. To me this morning.

They were reflecting. How. It's like a sanctuary. Where wounded people. Can come. And there can be healing. Where injured people. And searching people.

Can come. And there's a sanctuary here. And it's. And this word sanctuary. You know. Sanctified. It's about holy. A sanctuary means a. A holy place.

And you know. People use sanctuary. You know. There's a. There's a wildlife sanctuary. Down the road here. It's somewhere where. Where. Wild animals can go. And they can be cared for. And. And nurtured.

[14:32] And you know. When. There might be. Kangaroos. Or koalas. Or whatever it might be. That. Suffer in the heat. And. Or might. Have an accident. People bring them. To the sanctuary.

So that they can be cared for. And brought back to health. And sustained. And there's a sense. Where a church. Should be a sanctuary. You know. It's sanctified. It's a. There's a sanctification. Which speaks of holiness. So sanctuary. Speaks of. A holy place. And it's also. That place. Where. As a sanctuary. We can flee. And find comfort. And sustenance.

And protection. There's a sense of protection. When we gather together. In fellowship. Because there's a spiritual. Protection. When God's people. Get together. This sanctuary.

Is a place where love. And good works. Can be nurtured. Where we can provoke. One another. Where younger Christians. Can learn off older Christians. And older Christians. Can learn off younger Christians.

[15:26] Where we're a family. Together. With brothers and sisters. That. Ideally. We care for one another. We look out for one another. Fellowship is a safeguard. For us. There's a sanctuary here.

There's a safety here. In the fold. As it were. With the rest of the flock. There's a shepherding. And a nurturing. When we get together. And we can look out. For one another. We can watch over one another.

Because we care about one another. And we care enough. To speak the truth. To one another. There's times. That I can be quite straight. With people. It's not because I. Want to be mean. Or nasty. Or critical.

But because I love them. Because I care about them. And I want to see them grow. As Christians. There's a shepherding. And a nurturing. In the fellowship. And there's a wonderful. Sense of nurture there.

There's a sense of caring. For God's people. As shepherds of the sheep. That I and Brad. And others who minister. Rukukuya. And those in the. Leading and guiding. Of the church.

[16:20] There's a sense where. We're shepherding the flock. We're caring for one another. We're looking out for one another. I know. Brother Rukukuya. Makes a point. Of going. Visiting people. That might be. You could say. Straying sheep.

And we haven't seen them for a bit. We want to go. Look for that. One that's a stray. There might be 99 here. But we think of the one. That is a stray. And the Bible says. In Hebrews 13.

Verse 17. Obey them. That have the rule over you. And submit yourselves. For they must watch for your souls. They watch for your souls. As they that must give account.

That they may do it with joy. And not with grief. For that is unprofitable for you. Obey them. That have the rule over you. Now this is not a rule. As in a secular sense.

Of under your thumb kind of rule. But there's a sense where. There's a watching over. There's a caring for. There's a shepherding. There's a looking out. Because I have to give account.

[17:17] For your souls. Whoever it is. That is in ministry. Each one of us. That stands to minister. That has a heart. Of the shepherd. Has to give account.

For other souls. So there's something very. Very. Critical here. Something very. Spiritually. Eternally. Important here. There is an accountability here.

An accountability. Where the shepherd. Has an accountability. For those. In the fold. As it were. The shepherd. Of the sheep. That.

I and others that minister. Have a love for the sheep. For other brothers and sisters. And we want to see. A protection for the sheep. Because as Paul said. There's going to be wolves come.

It's going to come and devour. And there's a sense. Where we want to keep a lookout. For wolves. You know. It's been said that. For the predator. The easiest animal. To catch and kill.

[18:15] Is the loner. You know. When the wolves come. They look for the stragglers. They look for the loners. Those that are astray. From the fold. Those that are not.

In the protection. Of the fold. And so. Fellowship. Is a place. Of God's people. Gathering as sheep. As all of us are sheep.

That we gather together. And we grow together. We develop. Spiritual maturity together. And we can encourage. And learn from one another. Another aspect. Of a biblical church.

Is participation. Participation. There's a fulfillment. Found. As we. Encourage people. To take part. And it might be. Taking part.

In ways we've never done before. And that's how we grow. As a Christian. And I know. Kangamo. Rukakuya's son. Is looking. To maybe gather. Some of the young people.

[19:09] To get together. And to run a service. And I think that's a good thing. We'll work towards that. So that they can. Take part. And take the lead. And you might want to see more. Of the younger people.

But anyone who's gifted. And able. To join in song. Or music. Or whatever it be. To use their talents. And abilities. For the glory of God. Because biblical fellowship. Is about participation. It's where we find our fulfillment. Where love and good works. Can happen. Where we can use our gifts. And skills. And passions. For the Lord. And find how we can be used of God.

And so if you've got a gift. And a skill. If you've got an ability. Don't let it sit on the shelf. Dust it off.

And use it. For God's glory. You might want to bring a testimony. Or a message of exaltation.

Or a Bible reading. Come and tell me. I want you to be involved. I want you to take part. I want each one of you. Each one of us. To have that sense of participation.

[20:07] That we can participate. In the church. Because we're a wonderful. Unified body. That we're a building. We're a flock. We're an army. We're a family.

With God himself. As our father. And the Bible says. In 1 Corinthians 12. Paul uses the analogy. That we like a body. Like a human body.

As someone has put it. The eyes see the food. The hand gets it. The mouth chews it. The peristaltic motion. Of your esophagus.

Is for swallowing it. Then your stomach starts to work on it. And your intestines digest it. You know. All of these things. There's so many parts that are played. For such a task.

For the body. But every part plays its part. Every part is important. And all of these have to work together. For a common purpose. And any failure. In any of those parts.

[21:05] And you have problems. It's like in a church. There's meant to be. Diversities of gifts. Different gifts. Different talents. Different operations. So we can all join in. And participate.

1 Corinthians 12 verse 7. It says. But the manifestation of the spirit. In other words. How the spirit manifests. How the spirit works. Is given to every man. To profit with all.

In other words. It's given for everyone. For the benefit of all. For the benefit of others. That's what happens. When we need. When we fellowship. That. The.

The work of the spirit. Is for the benefit. Of everybody. Your giftedness. Your giftedness. Is for the good of others. And so. If you've got an ability.

Use it. Employ it. Employ it. For the good of others. To bless others. So some parts of the body. Are multi-purpose. Some aren't. We know that the tongue. Can be used for tasting.

[22:02] Talking. And chewing. Some parts of our body. Can do more than others. Some can do a variety of things. It's like that in the body of Christ. Some people. Have got lots of abilities.

Some people. Are limited to just one or two things. Just. Some. Some simple things. That they can do. Whatever it be for you. Don't be discouraged. Don't be discouraged. Or worried that you can't do what others can do.

Do what God has given you to do. Do what God has gifted you to do. Just be faithful. With what he's given you to do. So there's a sense where we're family.

We're brothers and sisters together. We're living stones. We're meant to be. Cemented together. With love. With a purpose. We've got a. God's made us for a purpose.

As the designer of a building. Has made that building to suit his purpose. So God. Has made the building. As such. The building of living stones. Of his own people.

[23:01] To be cemented together. As a. Living body. God's plan is for people. For. People who do different things. And it's interesting.

It's like someone has compared it to. An aeroplane. It's interesting to reflect. That an aeroplane. Consists of 100%. Non-flying parts.

It's interesting isn't it. Think of that. You know. You get the engine of an aeroplane. Or. The wing of an aeroplane. You know. On their own. They can't fly. They can't fly. None of those parts can fly. Except they be joined together. As an aeroplane. And it's when those parts. Joined together. They can achieve far more. Than they can separately. They can fly.

It's like that with the Christian church. You know. We can do more together. As we get together. Than if we are separate. There's a sense where fellowship. And.

[23:57] Combines the effort. And pulls us together. In that common task. So there's a responsibility. To one another. To exhort one another. And we can't exhort one another. If we stay home.

Biblical fellowship. Is marked by caring for one another. As I say. And I'll hand this out at the close. As many one another's. There's a list here. Of numbers of one another's. In Galatians 5.13.

It says in part. By love. Serve one another. Serve one another. It says. Admonish one another. In other words. Warn one another. Comfort one another.

Encourage one another. Worship with one another. Bear one another's burdens. Seek the good of one another. Be honest with one another. Show hospitality to one another.

Be at peace with one another. Be kind to one another. Forgive one another. Build one another up. Pray for one another. Receive one another. So all of these one another's.

[24:52] We can't do that. Unless we're together. Can we? In that sense. As much as. And again. Fellowship is not about necessarily. The meeting. You can fellowship with one another.

Outside of the meeting. Now this word. One another. Has the sense. Of reciprocity. It's reciprocal. In other words. One gives to another.

And the one. Gives back to the other. It's reciprocal. It's reciprocal. In other words. It's mutual. It's shared. It's felt by both sides. There's a unity in actions.

In responsibilities. And attitudes. There's the one another. A reciprocity. It's reciprocal. One to another. And this one another. It happens. Some have said.

58 times. In the New Testament. So fellowship is about one another. So I urge you today.

Fellowship. It's important. And so much the more. As you see the day approaching.

[25:48] It's time limited. This opportunity to fellowship. Because. Exhorting one another. And so much the more. As you see the day approaching. There's a day approaching.

And the Bible speaks of the day. Of the Lord. Speaks of the day of his judgment. So be devoted. To fellowship. Just to quickly. Recap.

The ground we've covered. Tonight. Fellowship. Let us consider one another. To provoke. Unto love. And to good works. Not forsaking.

The assembly of ourselves together. As the manner of some is. But. Exhorting. One another. And so much the more. As you see. The day approaching.

What have we looked at? We've seen fellowship. It's in one accord. There's a wonderful. One accordness. There's a partnership. There. There's a sanctuary. When we fellowship.

[26:44] It's not just a holy place. It's a place. Of peace. And of comfort. And of protection. There's protection there. There's love. And good works. There's participation there.

Participation. And fellowship is marked by. One another. One another. Make fellowship. A habit. Make it. Make it your practice to fellowship.

Let us consider one another. To provoke. Unto love. Unto good works. Not forsaking. The assembling. Of ourselves together. Let's pray. Let us pray.