

The reason we gather as the church is to point to the glory of God. Hebrews chapter 10 starting in verse 24. Here's what God's word says.

“and let us consider about how to stir up one another to love and good works” so this is us right here as the church and our job today is to think about and consider how we can walk around and stir up others to two things.

Number one is love and number two is good works.

This is our job. This is what we do as a church looking to stir up others towards love and good deeds.

What's the Lord doing? He calls us to stir each other up to love and good deeds and then good works. But here's what we are making sure we're not going to do. Where not neglecting meeting together.

“were not going to neglect meeting together as is the habit of some”. Do you know of some people who have neglected meeting together? Possibly you have at some time also neglected meeting together.

And it's easy to fall into a habit because life is busy and we got the Rugby World Cup games and we may have the Beach place that we can use and we get a long weekend, when we can just rest and kick our feet up and we've got a lot of things that are trying to keep us away.

But what I want to encourage you is that there are people that have the spirit of God in them. And that spirit is a can't quit Spirit. There is a spirit of God in a Christian that says I will not neglect. I will gather every single week. It doesn't matter if I feel great or I don't feel great. It doesn't matter if it's raining outside or if it's sunny outside.

There is a spirit inside the people of God that says I will fight through whatever I've got to fight through to be with God's people. That's what's inside of us and we will not give up Gathering, which is the habit of some, but instead, we're going to encourage one another.

But I have one question for you today. Why do we do Church? Really? Why do we do Church?

Some of you were raised going to church all the time and had no choice whether you were doing Church.

I wasn't raised in a Christian home so the church wasn't something we did. I had my choice to go back in my early twenty's.

But here's the importance of why we're answering this question today. If you don't know why we do church when you find a better way to not do Church, you won't be coming to church.

And I know that's already settled in some of the hearts of you older people because you've been doing church for so long. It's become just a rhythm and there's not a Sunday that goes by that you're not trying to do Church. I lot of your children and young people today aren't doing church anymore.

And they're not going to do church anymore just to do Church. They need to know why Church matters, why we do church and it can't just be the social reason. It can't, there's got to be more to it than that, they want an authentic and real answer.

Can you give the answer to someone of why you going to Church matters? Why do we do it? Why is it important? Why is it a high-value? Why should we set it aside? Why should we fight through the rain and cold of the wintertime? Why should we miss a live stream of a sports game, or sleep in late?

We do confusing things in church denominationally, traditionally of what it's about and what's important and things that church people think are important aren't important in the world and there you have confusion for those who are not yet Christian.

There are two common answers about why we do church that I have really seen and at different points in my life. I have answered why do we do church with these two answers.

The first is this. Many people ask why do we do we do church with this answer.

The church is for Saints, has anybody ever heard this before? The church is for Saints?

Ephesians 4 talks about this, that we're called to do church for the equipping of the Saints.

And so the church I came into was a church that was for Saints. And this, by the way, is not a bad answer.

There are some Bible verses that will support this answer, but what ends up happening and if I could just take us down memory lane for a moment, is if we answer the question, why do we do Church, churches for Saints this way, then what we end up building is holy Huddle's overtime. We end up building Club Church. Anybody ever been to one of those?

We end up building Church where everybody feels like they've got to put on a smile because we're all so great and everything's going so awesome in our lives, and we might have just had a meltdown in the car on the way to church that day. But we have to fake it till we make it.

And what happens when you do Church like this over time, if you go into these churches and I've been in plenty of them, you walk in and it feels like you walk through a time warp when you go into church there.

Everybody is stiff and, and sterile and in the church ends up being huddled in on itself. We isolate ourselves from the world and we really over time if we answer this question this way, what ends up happening is there begins to be a fear culture of any sort of change.

Everyone gets to be protective, and it's all because over time it devolves and the things that come out of these spaces and places are we absolutely don't live on Mission.

We also lose worship.

The presence of God is not in those places.

You don't feel and sense the Holy Spirit when you're in those places, and it's like everybody is just huddled up in a church Lifeboat, just waiting for Jesus to come back. And that's what ultimately happens over time if you answer the question of what is church for? The church is for Saints.

There's another way to answer this question, who is the church for? and it's this one.

The church is for Seekers. These are the two primary ways that people answer this question in the world today.

So back in the early 90s, there was a movement in America and it was really headed up by two men that are still to this day doing Ministry and people know their names and their churches are large and they really were a reaction to, let's do church for the Saints, and that didn't seem right for them. When you actually open your Bible you see Jesus Christ saying in the Great Commission, hey, we're called to go. Where called to reach our neighbours, we're called to love the Lost, where called to reach out to people that don't look like us or vote like us or sound like us or listening to music we do, and so if we're doing church for Saints all the time, then that seems to be contradictory to the Bible that I read and in the way Jesus lived.

I mean Jesus lived with people that we're not like Him. Jesus spoke to people that did not grow up like he did, as a matter of fact, he was known as a friend to those kinds of people. They called him a friend of sinners. He's washing their feet and breaking bread with them, and so there was a reaction to this church for Saints in the early 90s in America.

And like I said two pastors really spearheaded this Bill Hybels started a church called Willow Creek. The other Church leader is Rick Warren started Saddleback Church both started churches that were reactions to church for Saints and they started using the language Seeker Sensitive Church, and they started trying to make the impetus of church The priority of the church is to reach lost people.

And so the Seeker sensitive church was birthed. But can I tell you that this isn't the answer either Biblically.

So is church for discipleship or is church for evangelism, is church for evangelism? or is church for discipleship? is church for the Saints? Or is church for the Seekers?

And the bottom line is – priority number one is neither one of those.

Church is for God.

Church isn't about discipleship primarily, and church is not about evangelism primarily. Church is about worship... primarily.

Church is for God. Church is meant to be lived ... connected to him.

I want to show it to you in the scriptures Romans chapter 11 verse 36 says this, it says **“that from Him, (*that's Jesus or God*) and through the Lord, and to the Lord are all things so that the Lord in all things gets the glory”**.

Church is meant to be lived for God. Discipleship and Evangelism are incredible things. But when you do church just for the one you're going to do it for one at the expense of the other. If you do church just for the Saints you're going to not think about Seekers. You're not going to think about the lost, you're not going to think about missions, you're not going to care.

You're just going to huddle up and just hold on for the Lord to come. And if you do church just for evangelism, just for reaching people, for Jesus just for Seekers. You're going to see Christians get bored.

You're going to see people who all of a sudden are doing so much to reach Seekers that they're trying to look like the world and act like the world, that they throw Holiness to the side and they don't care anything about what the Lord has to say.

This is what Progressive liberalism is doing in our country today, is because people are so worried about offending someone that they'll throw the Bible out.... and say I don't care as long as we love themand it is not loving to anybody to not show them the very best way that God has called them to live. That is not love everyone.

It's not going to make them happy to just continue down that path. We were not created to ask the Bible to mold itself to us. But instead, we were created to mold our lives around the Bible. Our marriages around the Bible, our upbringings around the Bible, the way we handle our finances around the Bible.

The Bible is the rock..... we are the ones that are called to mould around it. And so Seeker sensitive Church to a fault, if you go down that path you're going to lose the power and the presence of God because you may not care about Holiness – and you're going to be so offended... by the cross.

And when we don't want to offend non-believers, and when you start going down that path you start leaving... Biblical worship,.... because you and I were created for a vertical worship relationship with God.

Our marriage, children, friends, family need all the horizontal relationships of our life to be sourced by the vertical relationship with God.

Fast forward to the end of the book in Revelation and after everything is done and we are going to be with our brothers and sisters from all time from all countries and we're going to be in a vertical relationship with God worshipping him. Holy, holy, holy we're going to cry out. Where not going to get bored.

But as we live life between these two gardens,.... The first one in the Old Testament is the one that we're looking forward to in the future.

The thing that God wants to do is he wants to get us back into right relationship with him so that we can live a vertical life now. So that people could see and understand what we were created for. You were made to worship. You were made for it.

You and I were made to live this way vertical to God,... declaring his glory in the Earth. This is what everything in creation is doing right now.

Everything in all the creation the Bible says is declaring Glory.....GloryGlory..... Glory..... except us, those who are created in His image.

Because the Bible says....this word Glory, the Old Testament word for it is Qavah. It means weight.

The old Halloween tale of **Ichabod** Crane his name actually means without Glory. It's a Biblical name Ichabod **means no glory**. The glory is gone.

But Qavah means weight or glory. In the New Testament, that word is doxa. Dox that's what it is in Greek, and that's where we get our word doxology. When it comes to Glory you and me because of our sin nature our first nature because of Adam we have this problem for all have sinned and we fall short of the glory of God.

We're unable to go- Glory, and so we are caught in a world of horizontal living in our sin nature.

And if you look around and you turn on the news or you open up the newspaper or you listening to your favourite album, if you're doing any of that What you are going to see people are trying desperately to put glory on things that it wasn't created to hold.

And so we're screaming glory and we're worshipping a politician..... who's going to make it great again (anyone doing that with the current elections?). And some people are giving their whole life for that other people right now they're going to put their glory on a rugby team because I love them, and they weren't meant to hold that.

Some people spend a whole lot of years trying to find that perfect someone, that perfect relationship, that beautiful lady or that beautiful man to put glory on.

People are trying desperately to put glory on things that weren't created to hold it. Some put glory on our bank accounts or our second house or that new car, some put glory on their career and others put glory on their job and the pursuit of happiness with money and finances, but the reality is most of us don't put Glory out there most of us put Glory, right here (pointing to yourself) I'm the best.

You want to see the most miserable people on planet Earth are people that live like this. Look at Hollywood. Because you know you weren't created for it and you can manipulate the world and manipulate your relationships manipulate your marriage manipulate and your career to try to put Glory anywhere else, but you weren't created and designed for it because it was intended to go in one direction.... Glory.

So the Christian life and the reason the cross is so important is that Jesus came to give us a new nature. He came to give us a new DNA a DNA that stops looking to put Glory out there and stops looking for Messiahs in politics or in sports or in the bank account or in the stock market and starts living the way we were intended from creation vertical living Glory.... live.

But we've got to recognize that just like in Rome and Paul wrote about this. In Rome, we've got to recognize that the people then struggled with the same thing we're struggling with today.

They had exchanged the glory of God for other things to hear this Romans chapter 1 verse 21. What were the people in Rome 2000 years ago were doing? ***“For although they people knew God they did not honour him as God, or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened”***,... this next verse describes our world perfectly.

“Claiming to be wise they became fools. And they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

We've exchanged the glory of God for other things now. Listen a lot of us still come to church while we're doing it.

We have fallen in love with the way we do church and it's not biblical Church. We've fallen in love with the way we stand up and sit down, in the songs we sing. Now these things in themselves are not wrong when living in a vertical relationship with God, if they remain in a horizontal relationship with others then we get into trouble.

We have to live in Praise to God through His Son Jesus. People are beginning to grab onto this concept and live vertically. The lost people in your work, your neighbour you know, need more than anything. They need you to live vertically.

You know, what? Do you know what they need from you and me more than anything else?. They need us to live vertically. Not for an hour and a half on a Sunday morning they need to see us walking with God all day everyday living to Him, for Him because that's what's going to stir up Saints and that's what's going to draw in Seekers and everybody's going to get what they need when you and I put the glory the weight of God where it belongs.

Qavah, ...Glory.... the weight.... Jesus Christ comes down and just like an elevator when we experience the weight of God in our lives you know what rises? the praise of God rises. And so if you don't have any praise going on in your life, I can tell you this, you have stopped giving your life vertically. Maybe you have forgotten that he saved you, forgotten that He freed you, you forget you're you don't have any punishment coming your way,.... and so why do we get together?

We get together to sing songs and to preach the word to remind us of the weight of God's glory and suddenly we get reminded and we sing praises start to rise, it's just like an elevator, the weight comes down and it raises up... Praise.

God gives us that bring life and fresh air and encouragement and faith and stir precise up to go out and live the lives He's called us to live, wherever. God's called us to live.

Go ahead. It's going to be awesome and we're about to sing some songs of praise soon. We praise you we don't care what we came in herewith. We know your greater, your greater than sickness, greater than the depression, you're greater than the anxiety, you're greater than the divorce, you're greater than whatever we're scared of.

We worship you we don't worship anybody else. St Francis Church is a church that lifts up the name of Jesus. As we worship you we know that Saint and Sinners alike are going to come to know you.

So we lift you up and we exalt you. Every voice.

Song sung – I Exult thee.