



"Do you go to church?"

"Where do you go to church?"

"Where is your church?"

These questions are as common in our area as "Is it going to be foggy today?" and yet they portray a fundamentally flawed understanding of what exactly the church *is*.

Biblically, the church isn't a building, it's a people!

As you read the Bible, you find several metaphors that are used for the church:

1. A body (Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27)
2. The "bride" of Christ (Ephesians 5; Revelation 19:6-8)
3. A flock of sheep (to be shepherded - Acts 20:28-29; 1 Peter 5:2-3)
4. A family (into which we have been adopted (Galatians 4:5) and now are to relate to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ (Matthew 12:48-50; 1 John 4:20; 1 Timothy 5:1-2)

What all of the biblical metaphors have in common is that they are not a place you go to, but rather a people whom we are. You do not *go to* the *body*. You either are a part of the body or you are not. Likewise, *family* is not something you *go to*, it's something you just *are*.

In the Bible there are no pleas for people to "go to church." The plea is for non-believers to come to know Jesus & his overflowing life & love, and hence *become* the church. In the first century, if you were a believer you were, inherently, a part of the church. If you weren't a part of the church, no one called you a believer.

Additionally, being a part of the church meant you were deeply involved in and committed to the life and well-being of the church (i.e. other believers).

Why It Matters

When Christians substitute seeing themselves *as the church* and instead see the church as a building we go to, we lose a fundamental piece of what it means to actually be Christian.

When I separate "church" out to something that I go to, I no longer see myself as a part of the church, but rather the church is peripheral to me. There is me... and then there is the church... but the two are not one-in-the same.

This is not biblical and it leads down a path to Christian consumerism where the church (which exists *apart* from me) is supposed to serve me and meet my needs and preferences. Viewing the church in this way converts it from a people (which I am a part of) to a vending machine of religious goods and services for my personal benefit. (This message was partly used from 2pillarschurch.com. Thank you.)

Recommitting to Being the Church

The church isn't a building, it's a people!

As Fall is here and many of us are settling into new schedules, I want to encourage us, the Westview family, to recommit to each other as a family, for together we are better able to experience God, encourage each other, serve together, and experience joy together. Let us reflect on how we can each invest in being:

- A people that together love God and love & encourage others.
- A people that together celebrate.
- A people that together bless and serve each other and our community.
- A people that listen well to those around them that do not yet know Jesus as Lord.
- A people who know how to rest and work to the glory of God.

I delight in being the Westview Church Family with you. This past April marked 14 years of my getting to be family with you, and this year marks 126 years of the existence of the Westview family! I have learned much from you, am continually encouraged by you, and delight in serving our community with you. God is Good! I

pray you will continue to count all the ways God blesses you personally, and also blesses you through the Westview family. The more we are involved in the family, the more we are blessed! God help us to remember, that together WE ARE the church.

-Pastor Dan
