

What's More Important Than Sunday Worship?

By Jack Wilkie

I'm just going to get straight to the point with this one. I want to know – what's more important than Sunday worship?

Because thousands of articles have been written and sermons preached, and yet I still have regular discussions with my preacher friends about how many people are missing on a given Sunday for other activities. Obviously there are many, many Christians who believe there are things more important than being at worship. So I want to know... what is it that's so important? What's going on elsewhere that outranks God?

Obviously I'm not talking about those who are shut-ins, those who are dealing with a sickness, or those who have the unavoidable work assignment from time to time. I'm talking about those who feel like they have something better to do. To them I ask:

- What's more important than worshiping God in the few hours per week set aside specifically for Him?
- What's more important than making time to encourage and be encouraged by your Christian family?
- What's more important than gathering with them to study God's word and share in prayers for each other?
- What's more important than remembering the sacrifice of Jesus by partaking in communion with your fellow Christians?

I'm not sure what it is that's so important, but I can tell you a few things that *aren't* the answer to those questions.

I can tell you that sports aren't more important. Like many things in life, sports are perfectly fine and useful and can even be used for good in our lives, but they can also become idols. Skipping worship for youth sports or to watch the big game sends the message to the Savior who died for you that you think He's really important...unless the game happens at the same time. It sends the message to observant little eyes that God can be put in second place for anything we want to prioritize over Him. In an era where a large majority of those raised in the church fall away, the last thing we need is more Christian parents teaching their children that the pew takes a back seat to the players' bench. I don't care if your child earns a scholarship, wins the gold medal, or takes home Super Bowl MVP, because if his or her soul is lost in the process, the tradeoff was eternally worthless (Mark 8:36).

I can tell you vacations aren't more important. It's good to get away every now and then, so you can't always be with your home congregation. But I guarantee you that most places you visit will have a congregation of the Lord's people nearby. Worship with them. Going out of town doesn't get you out of God's presence, nor

does it take away your call to worship Him. Unplugging from work, school, and everyday life is great... but a Christian should never unplug from God.

I can tell you sleep isn't more important. People get tired, I understand. There aren't many chances to sleep in, and Sunday morning worship means getting up early, especially for those with kids. But nobody even considers catching up on that sleep on Monday morning. Work and school don't get placed on a back burner. If you won't sleep through work but will sleep through Sunday church assembly, think about your priorities and just how seriously you're taking your God. Again, consider the message you're sending to your family, fellow Christians, and non-Christian coworkers.

We preachers are tired of pushing and prodding people to be in the pews on Sunday. We don't do it because we want you to check the box and say you've done your duty for the week. We do it because we know a Christian whose heart has been given to God will agree that nothing is more important than Him and that He comes first in all things.

I can tell you that there's nothing more important on Sunday morning than being there every time you can. There's always an excuse to be somewhere else. Don't take it. Meet with your fellow Christians and show your God that He's important enough to you to put everything aside and give Him your time. Give Him your Sunday nights and Wednesday nights, too, if your church gathers at those times. Be there for them, let them be there for you, and encourage one another to love God more.