



5 reasons you can't be a good Christian on your own

November 8, 2018 by [Jack Wilkie](#)

One of Satan's greatest tricks has been in convincing us that Christianity is an individual pursuit. An overwhelming percentage of the best-selling books written on Christian living focus on the individual's walk with Christ. Sure, we gather with our church family on Sundays and maybe Wednesdays, but beyond that many of us go throughout the week practicing a private religion, trying to do what we can to stay faithful in our own lives. That's simply how the Christian religion is viewed these days. But that's not how God intended it.

In a number of my recent articles I've urged the reader to find ways to spend more time with their church family. I do so because I firmly believe we can't fully develop into the serving Christians God intends for us to be without those tight-knit relationships. Here are 5 reasons why I believe that to be true.

Community facilitates love

I absolutely hate that stale exchange many of us have had in the church building week after week – "How are you?" "Good, how are you?" "Good." And we just go on with our week, regardless of whether or not we're having marital struggles or dealing with difficulty at work or can't overcome a sin in our lives. It's just not possible to fulfill the command to "love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34) when we get to talk to each other for a few minutes each week before and after worship and study.

Think about the implication of that commandment – loving one another as Jesus loved us. He said that directly after washing the apostles' feet and directly before going to the cross. That's a heavy responsibility we bear to one another. When we make time for community, we get the chance to love each other in this way, to serve each other, to bear one another's burdens.

Community facilitates holiness

"Confess your sins to one another" is a command (James 5:16), and it means a lot more than "Respond to the invitation if you've done something *really* bad." Confession must be a regular part of our Christian lives if we are going to overcome the things that keep us from being like Christ, and being there so others can confess their sins is just as important.

We all freely admit that we sin and have various struggles, but it's in being specific that we can get the help that we need. When's the last time you confessed your sins to a fellow Christian? When's the last time a fellow Christian confessed their sins to you? How many people are praying for a specific struggle you're facing? How many people's sin struggles are you praying for? For myself and from what I hear from others, I believe the answers to those questions are typically "I don't remember," "Never," "None," and "None."

When we draw near to one another in Christian community, though, we begin to trust each other. We begin to grow spiritually from our time together. It's in that kind of environment that we trust people enough to share our weaknesses and know that they'll be there to help us rather than condemn us. To truly grow in our personal holiness, we desperately need each other's help.

Community facilitates discipline

Correcting each other is an essential part of Christianity, but in order to happen a proper rapport has to be in place between Christians. Without that, correction just feels like criticism and cold judgment from people who are looking down on us. When we've felt the love others have for us through time spent together, then we know correction comes from a place of concern and a shared agreement that we're helping each other follow Jesus.

Community facilitates equipping and growth

I preach and teach every single Sunday. I know the value of sermons and Bible classes. But I also know they aren't enough to build up mature Christians. A few years ago, as a young, inexperienced minister I tried to get as much material as I could find on ministry. I read books, listened to lessons, read dozens of blogs. I found a lot of helpful material, but I realized what I needed for growth was a minister or two who I could sit down and talk to about my struggles and challenges. God blessed me with those people in my life, and my time with them has done more for me than all of the books, articles, and lessons combined.

The same principle is true for our spiritual growth. Sermons, Bible classes, and lectureships all have value and all serve a purpose, but each one of us needs the kind of intimate, direct learning specific to our own situations. When we draw near with other Christians and regularly have them in our lives to talk about God, the Word, and following Jesus, we'll grow in ways that can never happen from simply hearing a lesson every Sunday and Wednesday.

Community facilitates evangelism

Evangelism is hard. Most people are skeptical of religion and churches these days, and often discussions can just turn into arguments that go around and around with no end in sight. But Jesus saw community as the church's greatest apologetic. In John 17:20-23 He twice mentions that it's the church's unity that will convince the world that Jesus came down from the Father. In John 13:34-35 He said that it would be our love for each other that would tell the world that we are His disciples.

When our love and unity with our brethren extends beyond the church building, we have opportunities to invite people to be a part of that family. If we truly believe what Jesus says, then we'll

know that the best way to prove the truth of God's Word to outsiders is to introduce them to Christian community. I've seen it work in my own ministry. The kind of people who are hesitant to an invitation to Sunday worship can be much more agreeable to come over for a dinner from time to time as we slowly introduce them to our church family.

So... how do we build this kind of community?

1. **Don't let community be relegated to a church program.** Small groups, fellowship meals, and the like are all fine activities for churches to put on, but if we're not careful we can let those turn community into another box to check. The unspoken message can become, "You're supposed to fellowship, so we've put on this event to get in your fellowship time." But community isn't an event, it's a mindset where all of us seek opportunities to support and love each other.
2. **Look for reasons to be together.** Being like Jesus means being people-minded, and sometimes that means creating opportunities to be with people when we might not otherwise see them. Take turns helping each other out with yard work. Offer to drive a brother to the airport. Find ways to include them in your life and be involved in theirs. So often we turn down help from others because we don't want to inconvenience them, inadvertently denying them the blessing of serving and denying both of us the time spent together. Look to serve others, and let others serve you. That time will build the kind of bonds Jesus had in mind when He wanted us to love each other the way He loves His own.
3. **Open up your home.** Hospitality isn't just a good idea – it's a command (1 Peter 4:9). Having Christian family over for dinner or coffee to share each other's lives, to pray together, to open the Word together makes all the difference in the world. We bless others and they bless us as we emulate the Acts 2 church, devoting ourselves to fellowship, prayer, worship, and study together.
4. **Start a home Bible study.** Keep in mind that this isn't solely about making new friends. God must remain at the center of what we're doing, and one of the best ways to do that is to set aside specific time for discussing the Word. Get a few folks to commit to coming together for a Bible study, whether weekly, every other week, or even monthly. Sharing that time together will prove invaluable to your Christian walk as we serve and let others serve us.

If you're serious about pursuing Jesus and becoming like Him but haven't given yourself to Christian community yet, start looking for opportunities to build those relationships with your fellow Christians. Jesus said that the family we would receive as part of His church is the great blessing that makes our sacrifices for following Him worthwhile (Mark 10:28-30). As always, I believe He was telling the truth. Pursue community and see the kind of blessings and growth that come your way as a result.