



How to Best Prepare for a Worship Gathering

A couple weeks ago I preached on John 2:12-25, where Jesus whips some lazy worshippers and extortionists into shape and cleans up the Temple. I took some time at the end of that sermon to show how you can best prepare yourself to come to a worship gathering.

Don't blow it off – Hebrew 10:24-25

Scripture tells us to be intentional about gathering for worship so we can encourage each other and motivate each other to live lives that actively love others. As a Christ-follower, it is a sin to not regularly participate in a local body. We are created as inter-dependant beings who need each other (cf. Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4).

Right motivation – Psalm 122:1

Come not out of guilt or selfish gain, but come expecting to meet God and to worship Him with your community of faith. Coming together to worship is a joyful occasion...you should look forward to it and you should be glad about it. If you are not glad about coming together to worship, you need to examine your heart, repent of sin, or reconcile a relationship.

Come hungry – Matthew 5:6

Come needing to be filled up with Jesus' righteousness. All of our so-called "righteousness" are nothing but filthy rags to God. We need to come before him, both personally and corporately, hungry and thirsty for Jesus. If we don't come hungry, we will become critical, judgmental, and unteachable; preventing ourselves from being blessed by God and by our community (much less blessing anybody else).

Bring your best gifts – 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

Come prepared to give to Jesus sacrificially and cheerfully. Every local church is dependant on the financial giving of her members and regular attenders to accomplish the vision and mission of ministry that God has given to that church. Ultimately, we give to God...and God deserves and demands our best gifts, not our leftovers. But our giving is a response to the great love that God has shown us through Jesus, so we are to give sacrificially (like Jesus sacrificed for us) and we are to give cheerfully (because we love Jesus so much).

Manage your time well – Numbers 9:2

Come well rested, unhurried, and prepared. Each worship gathering happens at an 'appointed time'. You know when it's coming, so we should prepare our selves not just spiritually, but also physically. If we go to a morning gathering, we need to make sure that we get proper sleep the night before (especially the kids!). Our mornings also need to begin early enough to where we aren't rushed and getting to church 10 minutes late while we're arguing with our spouse and dragging the kids behind. If you are serving in a ministry during a worship gathering (band,

children, greeter, etc), make sure that you have reviewed, rehearsed, and prepared yourself to serve with the right attitude and spirit.

Use your talents – 1 Corinthians 12:7

Come ready to bless your community of faith with the talents, gifts, and abilities that God has given you. The whole point of our abilities, talents, and spiritual gifts are for the 'common good' – that is, to bless and minister to the entire body. Withholding your gifts does not honor God or your church; in fact, withholding your gifts hurts the body.

Engage the lost & disconnected – Luke 7:34

Come with a friend or ready to befriend someone who is spiritually disconnected and needing Jesus. Jesus was known as a friend of sinners. The reason Jesus came was to connect the disconnected and heal the "spiritually sick" (Mark 2:17). As we join Jesus' mission, we actively befriend the lost and include them in our community of faith, praying that they would come to know Jesus as Savior and Lord. The lost and disconnected are a vital part of the church, for they are the reason that the church exists.