

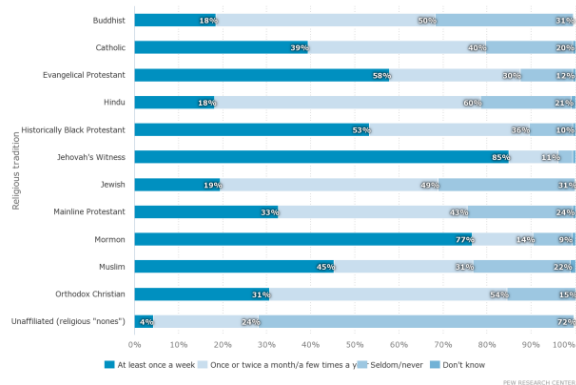
# Christian: Church Involvement is Not an Option.

We're seeing one particular creature in increasing numbers on the American landscape. These creatures are not new to us, but their population does appear to be on the rise.

*Ecclesiasticus Absentia*, more commonly known as the absent church member.

Pew Research found that, among those who identify themselves as Evangelicals, 30 percent at best may only attend church 1-2 times a month—and another 12 percent seldom, if ever, attend. That means 42 percent of those who say they adhere to the life and teachings of Christ have little or nothing to do with the body of Christ.

Attendance at religious services by religious group  
% of adults who attend religious services...



Let me be blunt. I seriously question how many of that 42 percent even have a personal relationship with Christ. When we come to Christ in faith, we are brought into His family. We are made a part of the body. As the apostle Paul said, we are "individually members of one another" (Rom. 12:5). In other words, we belong to Christ, and because each of us belongs to Christ, we belong to each other.

I am not saying the church is a part of your salvation. Nor am I saying you must be in church every time the doors are open. But in 50+ years of my own walk with Christ, I have yet to meet a growing follower of Christ who was not involved in the life and ministry of a local church.

The church doesn't save you, but you can't grow in Christ without His church. So when Paul said, we are "individually members of one another," he meant you

belong to Christ, I belong to Christ, and therefore, we belong to each other. I am responsible for you, and you are responsible for me.

**You need my spiritual gift—and I need yours.** No believer by himself has all the spiritual gifts. God calls us to work together to carry out the ministry of the church. You need my gift of teaching, and I need your gift of leadership. And we need someone else's gift of service.

"But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head — Christ. From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love **by the proper working of each individual part**" (Eph. 4:15-16).

**You need my encouragement—and I need yours.** The Book of Hebrews was written to a group of Jewish Christians on the verge of "backsliding" back into Judaism. They were growing weary of the difficulties they faced as followers of Jesus. For ten chapters the writer pointed to the superiority of Jesus to everything the Jews held dear. He closed out the book with a strong plea for perseverance. They could stand in their faith if they stood together.

"Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, **not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other**, and all the more as you see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:23-25).

Spiritual growth apart from a connection and involvement with other believers is not possible because that was never God's intention. I know, I know, Christians in the church can be so annoying. I can be annoying, but we are a family. At times, we may feel like a dysfunctional family, but that's why we need each other. We need the gifts God has placed in each of us to grow less and less dysfunctional and more and more like Jesus.

Get in church. Get involved, get growing, and get useful for the kingdom of God.