

## **I GO TO CHURCH VS. WE ARE THE CHURCH**

**The church is viewed as a place/building where religious goods are dispensed rather than as the Body of Christ. The pastor plays the key role. We "go" to church rather than seeing ourselves "as the church." The future of our church depends on our understanding of church as "the Body of Christ" in which each person has the responsibility to contribute his or her unique gifts in ministry.**

How we talk about something can give insight into some of the assumptions and expectations that are operating in our behavior. It is very common to talk about, "going to church" or to ask "What church do you go to?" In similar fashion we "go to the store," "go to the club," the game, the mall, or the movies. We do not talk about "going to the family." In fact to use those words in connection with family sounds awkward and out of place. We ARE family and we ARE church. At first this may seem to be merely a clever observation about the use of words. However, it invites reflection about whether or not some of our ways of thinking and participating in the life of the church have become disconnected from their biblical roots.

Questions for reflection:

- With which statement do you most identify: "I go to church" or "We are the church?" What is the difference between the two?
- Where the underlying notion of church is "I go to church," what activities are important? Where it is "We are the church," what is important?

**What this hypothesis causes me to pray for is:**

- that our church continues to grow and prosper and be a home to me and other Christians.
  - for people who aren't part of a church to see the community, family, wholeness that one can gain from "being part of the body."
  - we are - Love and Comfort (given and received), Faith, Temperance (not that of over 100 years ago, but), Tolerance, Acceptance, Family, Home, Community!
- I pray for those and other God-given values to be expressed, in all of us, by all of us, as a church family, with grace!

- “We are the church” We are the body of Christ to comfort others and reach out. Also, to be comforted by the body of Christ.
- that as a congregation of Christians we will BE disciples of The Way. In deed and in action may we find ways to serve and BE, not only get.
- to understand that away from the building (“church”) that I am the church, building or no building. To represent it well and live the way I should in or out of the building.
- those who do not have a church family or have never felt part of the church. Someone in their life to guide them.
- Outside the walls of this church, I am a reflection of this church family. Through our joys and struggles and changes we remain a church family.
- We are the church. May we work together in community to solve problems.
- that we can be examples of the Body of Christ outside the church doors. That we can continue to be a community and family and we welcome everyone to be the church.
- We are the church. I pray that more would get involved in the church as a whole versus just to “go to church.” We are family and it takes everyone to keep us whole and healthy.
- I go to church to be ministered to. We are the church is my outreach in the community and at home. I pray that I will always represent the church and my God as I leave Sunday worship.
- that I will “be the church” rather than just “go to church.”
- that wherever I go or do others can tell “I am the church.” That I be aware that it is what I should be.
- for people who aren’t able to call a certain church “theirs” to be able to find one to call “theirs.” For those who are confused about what to do or are not doing. For those who need a loving church family.
- that each person in our church family will use their special talents in ways that will help all of us in ways we may not even realize. Even a smile may make someone’s day.
- the personal connections needed to provide all with a sense of being a part of the church body, rather than the feeling of obligation to fill a seat in the sanctuary. I pray we all feel tied by desire to be here, not required to come.

- ability to go out and live God's word so that others may be inspired or moved to know about the Lord.
- I pray that when out in the community I will be caring, compassionate and loving to all people as Jesus was.
- a way that I as an 80 year old woman can contribute and become part of the church instead of "I go to church." You become the church when you put something back into it. You go to church and when you leave you always take something with you to sustain you in life's adventures. When you put something back into the church then you are part of the church.  
"Going to church," you take.  
"Being the church," you give.