

MercEmail A Weekly Devotional by Steve Higginbotham

Time To Go To Church!

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"Time to go to church!" Those five words probably resonate with most of us. It may be that we've heard those words spoken by our parents many times on a Sunday morning, or by our spouses as we try to gather up our children and get everyone to the car.

According to the prophet Malachi, "going to church" had become a "weariness" to the children of God in his day and time (Malachi 1:13). However that was not so with everyone. David said, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord'" (Psalm 122:1).

In 1982, I spent the Summer working as a "preaching intern" for a congregation in Michigan. One of my duties while there was to go to an elderly man's house and literally dress him so he could go to church. He suffered from severe arthritis. I had to put his shirt and pants on for him, button all the buttons, tighten his belt, and tie his shoes for him. To say the least, I was out of my comfort zone. And I remember thinking at the time, "If anyone had a reason to stay home, it would have been this man. God would certainly understand." But this man would have none of it! He wasn't about to stay home. He wanted to "go to church," and paid a painful price to do so.

It was while helping this man get ready for church that Summer that I learned an important truth. "Church attendance has very little to do with the distance one lives from the building or the inconveniences and difficulties we encounter. Rather church attendance is more often than not, determined by the distance between one's heart and God." Excuses abound where determination is lacking.

"Time to go to church!" When you hear those words, are you wearied, or thankful? Give it some thought.

By Steve Higginbotham, 2015. Permission is granted to copy these articles.