

Five reasons to “go to church” this weekend

By Rev Rodney Hui



The pandemic has effectively disrupted church life that we were so accustomed to before. With measures easing, there is every reason to gather again. The relaxed safety measures makes attending church all the more easier.

Since my conversion in 1971, it had never occurred to me that going to church was optional. All along I thought it was just the normal thing to do. With time, this habit only became ingrained in my life. It’s now my DNA. This is perhaps the case for most older Christians. Having been to 100 countries and having the incredible privilege of joining in gatherings of Christ followers, I am convinced that the church, the Body of Christ, deserves our love, commitment and attendance.

This message is not a theological paper about going to church. It is simply a call to return to your church and to church life.

Here are five reasons why we should return to church at this time.

#1 We should not give up gathering. Heb 10:25 says, “*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*” It is true that no where in the bible does it say “go to church”. Church is never a building, but a group of Christ’s

followers. This verse is reason enough to gather. Never in our experience has such an exhortation been more appropriate than it is now!

#2 It is tradition worth keeping. It is a great mistake after two thousand years of meeting together to think that anything less would suffice. It is a great mistake to abandon church-going. “Church” on a typical Sunday embodies the worship and prayer of a community of Christ’s followers, reading and preaching of the word of God, breaking of bread and more. Out of necessity we have done so over social media the past 2+ years. Now we need to get back to the fundamental in-person community we read in Acts 2, 4 and elsewhere. This is a great biblical practice. Elder Keng Gian of Hope PC candidly said to me, *“worshipping God and singing with fellow Christians is different from singing, facing a screen!”* There is a danger that we, so-called modern man, imagine we can abandon the great Biblical practice of meeting together with other believers.

#3 It is time for a physical reunion. After a hiatus from church, it is time to have a physical reunion with church members. Having started returning to church physically myself, I have been amazed to finally meet the people I have missed for 2-3 years. To be honest, I now look forward every Sunday to meet old faces, to say hello and to catch up, albeit briefly. A great motivation for me is to hear of answered prayers of members, including my own prayers for them. Another joy I derive from meeting members is the opportunity to pray in-person for them. Yes, we pray online, but there is just something special about praying in-person. One bonus blessing for me is to see young children returning to Sunday School. It’s a joy to hear the noise of children in church once again. The dynamics of being physically present will inevitably result in encouragement, edification and the stirring up of one another to faith and good works.

#4 It is how we love one another. The bottom line for going back to church is loving people. It is hard to admit that we are self-centred. The second command to “love your neighbour as yourself” is not something that happens automatically. How can we love without turning up? There is something to be said about being there for those in need. The Church is the visible Body of Christ. To love, to care for and be there for the Body of Christ is an expression of our love and worship.

#5 Attending church in-person is a privilege. Christians in religiously repressive and war-torn countries do not have this luxury like we do. They long for mutual fellowship and they find strength in meeting together. Christ’s presence is intimately felt when they meet. It is to our own detriment when we neglect gathering together. We must not take this privilege for granted. Lk 12:48 *“Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.”* Thank God for those faithfully serving us and keeping the church operating. As measures are eased, the least we can do is to turn up in church!

I believe coming back to church is going to be a new experience because many things have changed. We cannot take gathering for granted. Christians have lost their lives to the virus and I believe we will treasure each other more. Together we can make church better. Let’s play our part in coming back.

PS - *Some people are, understandably, avoiding church for reasons of safety and vulnerability to the virus. Others shy away from church for personal reasons. Let us exercise patience and compassion as we look forward to seeing all in church again.*



Rev Rodney Hui is Katong Presbyterian Church's missionary pastor who has been involved with OM for more than 40 years. Having returned from a four-year stint with Irene, his wife, on the Mv Logos Hope, Rodney enters a new season of ministry as a missions mentor. Author of several books, he also enjoys cycling!