

## INTRO

- what's your earliest recollection of going to a church service? What was it like?

## READ

- Acts 2:42-47, Heb 10:24-25

In this summer series, we are exploring the 6 practices of the early church and using that as a template for what we should devote ourselves to as the church today.

## REFLECT & RESPOND

In the NT, the church (*ekklesia*) is the gathering of Jesus followers into a **worshipping community**. From the core text, we know they gathered regularly to worship together, both in large public settings (Temple) and in smaller groups in homes.

The importance of the church gathering weekly as a worshipping community became a cornerstone of Christianity and continues in various forms and settings to this day.

*Qu: what are some reasons you can identify for why many Christians today don't consistently participate in church worship whether on Sundays or small groups?*

## THE CHURCH GATHERED IN WORSHIP & WITNESS

The people of God become the new temple for God's presence and when gathered together are a sign of **worship and witness** in the world (following the pattern of the tabernacle and temple in the OT).

When the church gathers together regularly for fellowship, singing & scripture, it serves as a time and place where our **attention, affection** and **allegiance** is directed and stirred toward Jesus.

And it is this worship and witness to Jesus as Lord that poses the biggest threat to the powers that be, whether demonic or political, that even to this day seek to shut down, ban and declare illegal church worship gatherings.

Yet, the Christian faith has strongly and consistently emphasized corporate worship even under highly dangerous and life-threatening circumstances. In other words, the benefits outweigh the risks.

*Qu: how does gathering regularly whether in small group or on Sunday benefit you?*

Here in the West with our religious freedom, our challenge with regard to prioritizing church worship is not persecution or government threats. It is threatened by our hyper-individualistic, consumer-based culture; apathy and neglect (see Heb 10:24-25).

*"There's an element of worship and Christianity that cannot be experienced in private worship or by watching worship. There are some graces and blessings that God gives only in the 'meeting together' with other believers."  
— Don Whitney*

*Qu: what do we stand to lose if we don't prioritize a practice of gathering together regularly as a church community?*

## RESPOND & PRAY

- Pray for a deeper conviction on the importance to gather regularly as a church community
- Pray for wisdom to look at our calendar and lifestyle to see where God may be challenging us to prioritize Him and His people