

What has your church life done for you?

Acts 4:13-37

Sometimes people don't know why they go to church. It's just a habit or tradition. The family or the spouse expects it. Maybe the music or the message gives a little inspiration that will help us get through the week. We meet good friends there. There could just be something about the building itself that helps us feel better. Perhaps we only go to church when we have a crisis, or a wedding, or a funeral, or special occasions (Christmas, Easter, etc.). We need to see the church (i.e. the assembling of ourselves together – Hebrews 10:25) as the center of attention for God's work on earth at this time (Ephesians 3:21; Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 12:31-32). The church is more than a "refueling station"- where we pull in anytime we feel empty. Neither is it merely the "service center" – where we get routine maintenance and repairs. The church is not where we meet our "parole officer" – so we don't get in trouble with the law (i.e. God). The church is a family of believers, bound together in a working relationship, seeking to fulfill the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandment (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:44-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8 cp. Matthew 22:36-40).

So, when we ask the question, "What has your church life done for you?" we want to go beyond some of the simple benefits a church life yields and pursue those things that speak of transformation, direction and fulfillment of the will of God for our lives. Many passages could help us — in this answer (Acts 2:41-47), but today we will focus on Acts 4:23-37, where we see the church serving, receiving persecution, responding to that crisis and moving forward.

Have you become partners with God's servants? - Acts 4:23 cp. III John 5-8; Hebrews 13:3

Do you have a prayer ministry? – Acts 4:24 cp. II Timothy 2:22; Ephesians 6:18-19; Hebrews 10:19-25

Do you have a greater vision of God's sovereignty and Christ's majesty? – Acts 4:24-28 cp. II Corinthians 3:18; Hebrews 12:2-3

Have you been experiencing the fullness of the Holy Spirit – speaking boldly for Christ from the Scriptures? – Acts 4:31 cp. Ephesians 3:14-19; I Thessalonians 1:4-10

Are you experiencing spiritual unity and love with other believers? – Acts 4:32 (a) cp. John 13:34-35; I Thessalonians 4:9-10; Galatians 5:13-14; I Peter 1:22

Have you grown in the grace of giving and Christian stewardship? – Acts 4:32 (b), 34-37 cp. II Corinthians 8:7-9 (see all of chapters 8-9)

Have you witnessed the power of God's Word? – Acts 4:33 (a) cp. I Thessalonians 1:5; 2:13; I Corinthians 2:1-5; I Peter 2:23-25; John 6:63; Psalm 119:50; Hebrews 4:12

Have you grown in grace? – Acts 4:33 (b) cp. II Timothy 2:1; II Peter 1:2-8; 3:18