

WHY COME TO CHURCH! Romans 1:8-13

Int: First Paul thanked God for the faith of the Roman Christians because the fact that there was a Christian congregation in the imperial capital had set people talking around the whole empire (1:8). Paul had never been to Rome but had wanted to go badly and had prayed fervently to be allowed a visit.

In 1:9-10 he described his request in three ways. His prayer was *sincere* because he called God as a witness to his longing to go. God knew! It was *constant* because he kept on asking that God would permit it. And yet it was *submissive* because he preferred the will of God to a premature trip to Rome. He who expects Paul's success in prayer must imitate Paul's style in prayer!!

At last Paul came to explain the reasons he wanted to come together with the Roman believers (1:11-13). In that explanation stand some abiding reasons for God's people to come together to church. Like Paul, come to church to

GIVE SOMETHING 1:11

Paul did not define "spiritual gifts" but it is clear the apostle expected the Holy Spirit to use his presence in Rome to provide some blessing which would strengthen the faith and obedience of Christians there. Paul's first reason for gathering with a congregation was to bless it and make it stronger.

Most folks choose a church based on what they can get from it. How much better to choose a church based on what they can give to it!

First and foremost, I come to church to give something. So should you!

GET SOMETHING 1:12

Compared to Paul the Roman believers were rank beginners in the Christian life, baby Christians. But Paul expected them to bless him even as he blessed them. No believer is so mature he cannot be blessed by the newest Christian. Paul expected to give to the group but also to get from the group!

Fellowship is a two-way street. Everybody in church can be a blessing to everybody else in church. For instance, even while a pastor feeds and strengthens his people their faith and good works and response bless him.

I come to church to get something. So should you!

GATHER SOMETHING 1:13

Paul expected results from his labor. When he gathered with the Roman Christians he expected to gather a harvest in the form either of new converts or of fresh Christian growth.

Believers should gather for church with anticipation, expecting something to happen., looking for lives to be change and homes rearranged. They should come wondering who will be here and be touched by God.

I come to church to gather something. So should you!

Con: Come to church "as if it were the first time, as if it could be the best time, and as if it might be the last time" (Vance Havner).

Why do YOU come to church? If you come for these reasons you will not often go away disappointed!