

I MISS CHURCH

It has been 3 Sundays now that I have not attended church. I miss it. I miss how much it adds to my life. I miss the words from the sermons (do not tell but some of my ideas for devotionals are from sermons. Often Pastor Don's words will connect me with something that happened in my life or something that I should be doing and am not). I miss the music; I miss the friendship. From being greeted at the door to talking with the Ushers to being seated in the pew, to reading the Bulletin and the Prayer List and then counting how many are in the choir (I do not know why I do this, but I do) especially greeting those wonderful people that I care so much for and that care for me. Then after the service there is time to catch up with some, finding out how they are and talking with them. Once a month I have the privilege of praying with those in need of prayer for themselves or loved ones. This simple act gives me comfort and it is a precious gift that I can do this. I continue to pray for their needs later as I think of them. As I have listed the things I miss when I cannot attend church, I realize why I miss church. It is the connection with other Christians, those that are certain in their faith and those that are humbled by the knowledge that Christ came for them and loves them, and they thank God for the gift. We are all in various stages of our faith but what brings us together is stronger than that that separates us. Coming together in the building we call church helps us realize that we are one, we are committed to a trinity, we are committed to making the church become what Christ called it to be, a place for all who want to know and to grow. My body is healing, and I am doing well, and I will soon be back among my church people. Thanks be to God. I remember that through all things Christ is with us. That through our grief, through our "falls" through our sins and our forgiveness, through whatever life brings into our lives even separation from loved ones and loss, through it all, nothing can separate us from the love and comfort of God. There is a place that was planned by God for us to come to where we are humbled by love. It's called church.

Colossians 3:12-17 Therefore as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds that all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Dear Lord, we thank you for the blessings of this day, for the comfort of your presence in our lives. Be with the sick and those who are grieving. May they feel your arms around them and be comforted. May we do as Jesus commanded Peter and, "Feed your sheep," not only those that hunger for food but those that hunger for you. Be with our Pastor and bless his ministry, grant him safety and be with his family. Be with our staff and leaders, give them guidance and comfort. Be with those in our community who have needs, may we answer their need and give them the peace that comes from you. Be with our country Lord as we seek to be a united country. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson