

Connecting with the Body of Christ

Ahhhhh... Going home for the summer! No reading, writing, arithmetic to be learned or to be thought about for 3 months. You have sold your books for a small price but at least you don't have to lug 'em home. Saying goodbye to your friends might be tough but you know you'll see them in a few short months and you'll catch up on what God did in all of your lives when you get back.

Some of you will go home to a great environment in which you have encouraging parents that will point you to Christ, and others will go home to an environment that discourages you to walk with the Lord. You may have non-Christian friends in your life that will want you to go back to old habits that go against the Lord, or you may have a group of friends that are fun to hang out with and you can talk openly about your faith. Summer can be a turning point in which your walk with the Lord can become deeper or non-existent depending on choices that you make based on God's word. Do not fool yourselves that you can walk closely with the Lord without people in your life that will point you towards God. God created us to be in community with one another and one of the best ways is through a local church.

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and the greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22: 36-39) Jesus commands us to LOVE God ie. have a relationship with Him. Secondly, Jesus commands us to LOVE our neighbor. We are to have relationship with Him and with others. No way did God intend for us to be isolated in our walks with Him.

Paul urges us to, “... hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another...” (Hebrews 10: 23-25).

Where would you find community this summer as well as for a lifetime? It is the body of Christ or to put it more plainly a local church. What does a church provide? The church represents the body of Christ. Left on our own we are limited; however, the body of Christ represents our diversity in unity in order to glorify Christ on earth. In 1 Corinthians 12 is a description of the body of Christ. We each have a role to play designated by the Holy Spirit who gives us gifts of mercy, service, teaching, sharing our faith with non-Christians, administration, wisdom, etc.

The body of Christ also comprises people of all age groups with varying experiences and stories full of faith, disappointments, and joys that can minister to you and encourage you to walk with God for the long haul! You may gain perspective that will give you wisdom for your future as well as mentors that would be praying for you when you go back to college.

One of the hardest things about getting involved with a local church is finding a church. Some helpful questions to ask:

- Is the pastor teaching the gospel and preaching God's Word?



- ❑ Does the church care about reaching the lost in the community and around the world?
- ❑ Are there ways you can serve in the church (greet people, visit people in the hospital and read to them, take care of kids in the nursery, teach Sunday school, help with vacation Bible school in numerous ways, do maintenance jobs or take care of the landscaping, singing, etc)?
- ❑ Is there a Bible study you can get involved with (if not, you may want to ask the Pastor if you can lead one?)
- ❑ Is the church committed to loving Christ and loving each other?

If you have never searched or been a part of a home church you may want to ask other Christians in town where they go to church or you could look in the phone book for churches and make a list of the top 3 that you would like to check out and decide from there. You can also meet with the pastor and ask what opportunities there are in the church to get involved with as well as how you can serve.

The summer is before you and hope it is one full of faith and fun too as you connect with the Body☺

