

Signs & Symbols - Church Services



Look around you in church this coming Sunday – what are you all doing there?

What draws people to come to church, ever? Each of us has different needs and enjoys different things, so what is it that pulls us all together?

For some it's where we've always come on a Sunday; Sunday wouldn't be Sunday without coming to church. 'Church' becomes a way of living without us really thinking about what draws us there or the reasons behind it.

Are we hypocrites? Do we just come on Sunday and then behave badly the rest of the week? Do we use church to get our weekly bucketful of forgiveness so we can start again?

Do we come to see our friends and make arrangements for socialising with them, saving the money on telephone calls? Or is it perhaps a chance to try out our new outfits?

Do we come to feel better? To get a weekly 'fix' of happy high?

Or is it because it's our duty to come, and by doing that, no matter how good or bad the service is, we at least feel we've done our bit.

Do we come to bring our troubles and worries and give them to God so we leave less anxious and more comforted?

It's amazing that church congregations work so well together when the basic reasons of our actual being there are so often poles apart - if not in actual conflict with each other!

So, you may be wondering, where do the signs and symbols come in? Well it's fundamental: we could all stay at home or walk in the countryside but we choose to come to the same place at the same time. Presumably if we had warm weather and not many articles needing to be stored between services, we could meet outside rather than in a building. As it is, we meet in a church building, and we deliberately plan to meet at the same time rather than have a larger time into which we all 'drop-in' for our own chosen shorter periods.

So 'church services' are about meeting together; together with each other and with God. The expectations we each bring with us about God, ourselves and other people help to shape the results of that coming together.

This month

Have a think about your own expectations – from God, yourself and from other members of the congregation. What do you think your part is in helping the other members to meet their expectations?

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