

*depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.
(Acts 20:7)*

9. **Having another service time allows for practices and meetings.** Admittedly, this is a matter of practicality, but I see it as a needful matter of practicality. Our church choir practices before services on Sunday evenings, and our orchestra practices after church on Wednesday evenings. Other ministries of the church are able to have quick meetings or training sessions at a time when everyone is already coming to church.
10. **Revival has not come to a country with less emphasis on gathering for the preaching of the Word and prayer.** I long and pray for revival in America. But history doesn't indicate that it will begin in churches that have given in to the lack of fervor of Laodicean-like Christians who are comfortable with token Christianity. It doesn't come to people who say, "I'm fine and in need of nothing," but to those who hunger for God and are desperate for His reviving.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: (Revelation 3:15-17)

*Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?
(Psalm 85:6)*

Considering our need for personal growth, the value Christ placed on the church, the price He paid for it, and the commands of Scripture regarding the local church, I believe Dr. Lee Roberson had it right when he suggested Christians need "three to thrive."

Having three services a week—Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and a midweek Bible study and prayer service—is a benefit, not a burden, to the spiritual health of God's people.

1. thomrainer.com/2015/01/03/fifteen-trends-churches-2015-part-1/



10 REASONS WE STILL HAVE SUNDAY EVENING SERVICE

BY DR. PAUL CHAPPELL

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I've known for some years that the Sunday evening service in Baptist churches has been on the decline. But I read a recent statistic by researcher Thom Rainer stating that only 5 percent of churches have a Sunday evening service.¹ That number startled me.

Personally, I love Sunday evening services, and I know many in our church family do as well. But I believe this service is needful for more reasons than personal taste. (Not that a personal taste for church would be a bad reason!)

As I considered the 5 percent statistic, contrasted with how the Lord has used the Sunday evening services at Lancaster Baptist Church, I jotted down ten reasons I believe Sunday evening services are needful. Most of these have strong scriptural support, while a few are matters of practicality.

1. **People lack knowledge of God's way.** If church attendance were merely a "good Christian activity" to check off a list, one sixty-minute service a week may do the trick. But it isn't. It is a time to hear the preached Word of God (which has been labored over in careful study) to apply it to our lives. One service a week isn't much to counter the competing influences of the world's ways that most Christians encounter throughout the week.

*Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.
(1 Timothy 5:17)*

- 2. People lack knowledge of God's Word and a relationship with its Author.** Many Christians are biblically illiterate. And in my observation, the percentage of those who are ignorant of God's Word is much higher among those who only attend church on Sunday mornings.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee...seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God... (Hosea 4:6)

- 3. We are commanded to assemble and to exhort one another "so much the more."** The practice of first-century Christians as well as the admonitions of Scripture direct us to more church attendance, not less. The growing hostility of our world toward Christ and Christianity increases our need to gather around God's Word with God's people.

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (Hebrews 10:25)

- 4. Home study approaches are often less attended than corporate services.** Some leaders have looked to meet the needs listed above by having home study cell groups on Sunday evenings. The statistics I've read show that long-term home study groups are less attended than scheduled services.

- 5. There is a cost to discipleship.** One of the most prevalent—and concerning—reasons churches drop Sunday evening services is for lack of interest. Too many people, they say, are not interested in the added time commitment of Sunday evening services. To me, this indicates a need for Sunday evening services. Committed disciples have never based their decisions related to spiritual growth on convenience.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (Matthew 16:24)

- 6. Sunday evening is a unique preaching time tailored for Christians.** While morning services tend to have a gospel-preaching emphasis, Sunday evening messages allow

greater freedom for strong preaching, concentrated toward people who, by their very presence, have indicated greater commitment to the Lord and a hunger for His Word.

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. (2 Timothy 4:2)

- 7. Sunday evening allows for a full "family-style" gathering as a congregation.** Gathering at church is not solely for the purpose of preaching; it is also for the purpose of relationships with a church family. The church is a flock—a group—and we need collective time together. Churches with a strong ministry emphasis in the morning services have people spread out helping in children's classes, bus routes, and various ministries on Sunday mornings. Sunday evening is like the "family dinner" in a home. It allows a church family to all gather at once for mutual edification and encouragement. (In churches, such as ours, with two Sunday morning services, the Sunday evening services are especially needful in building continuity as a congregation.)

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. (Acts 20:28)

- 8. Having another service time allows for missionary presentations or guest speakers.** Hearing how God is working in other places—especially on the mission field—is needful for churches, and it follows the first-century pattern of missions.

And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. (Acts 14:27)

It's worth mentioning as well that Paul preached as a guest speaker in Troas at a Sunday evening service until midnight. :)

And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to