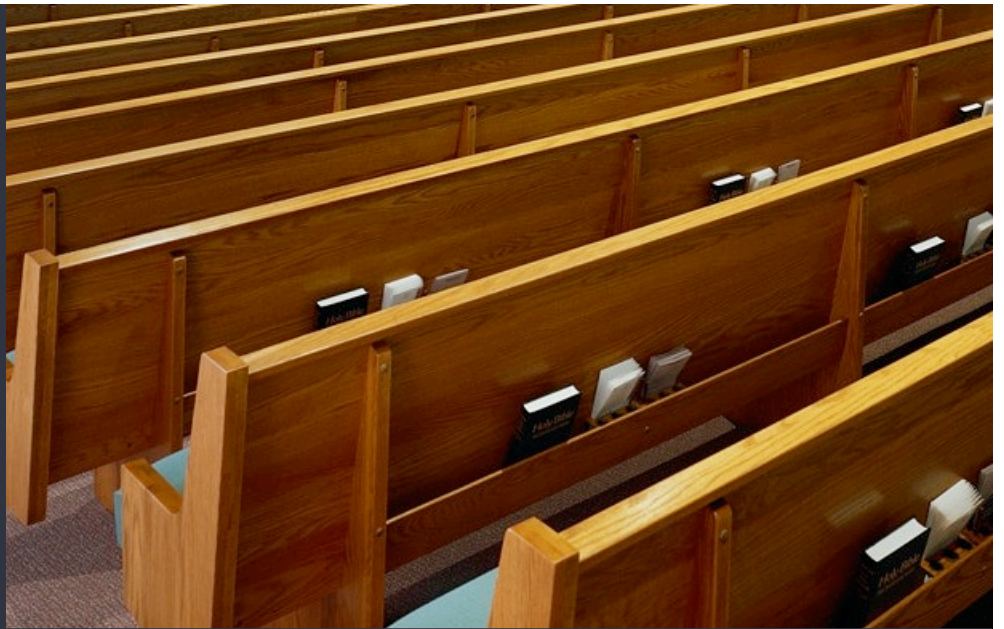


SSP

The Church of Jesus Christ



Church 2.0

A church service isn't a spectator sport.
It's time to get involved!

Take responsibility for what you get out of each church service

By Sis. Michelle Watson

Have you ever heard the term “Web 2.0”? It’s an outdated term that people used to describe the Internet when it morphed from being static to interactive. Nowadays, people don’t want to just *look* at a website. They want to *interact* with it — by posting a comment, a rating, a picture, starting a discussion thread, asking a question or “hearting” something. We want to make our mark on the big triple-w.

We should have the same attitude toward our church services. They should be *interactive*. We shouldn’t be

satisfied with simply sitting in the pew, looking straight ahead, not engaging with what’s going on around us — like we’re on an airplane. We should be thinking, reacting and contributing during church. It’s dynamic. It’s personal. It’s a two-way street.

It’s Church 2.0.

How do you “interact” with a church service, you ask? Below are some ideas I’ve come up with. The whole point is to actively *engage* during the meeting, instead of mentally checking out.

Opening Prayer

When you bow your head for opening prayer, do you concentrate and pray, or do you admire your new shoes? Here are some things you can pray for:

- Invite the Lord into your heart, ask to feel his Spirit
- Ask for direction, inspiration, and unity for the ministry
- Pray for others in the congregation (visitors, those who are ill, distracted, or bored)
- Ask God to remove distractions

Preaching

Sure, I’ve zoned out of my fair share of sermons, but that’s my fault, not the minister’s. Often when we

don't get anything out of a sermon, we say it was dry or maybe the speaker had an off day. But honestly, we need to take responsibility for what we get out of it. If a message isn't very interesting, don't get irritated. Pay *more* attention. Be *determined* to find something you can take away from it. Here are some ideas for how you can do that.

- Look up the scriptures the minister uses
- Take notes: jot down scriptures, memorable phrases, summarize the theme
- Make a list of questions to ask the minister later
- Try to find a song that relates to the theme so you can call it later given the opportunity

Testimony

I know some of you would rather jump off the church roof than give your testimony, but I'm going to challenge you. Try giving a 30-second testimony next Sunday. And be the first one to stand up.

You have no idea how good it makes the congregation feel when the young people get up and testify. A good testimony can entirely change the direction of a meeting.

Here are the characteristics of a good testimony:

- Full of praise to God, focused on God the whole time
- Sincere, genuine, not just lip-service
- No complaining
- No preaching (testimony-sermon)
- Less than one minute long

Communion

One time, my husband saw a teenager clipping her nails during communion. Granted, she wasn't baptized, but still. I don't want to throw this young girl under the bus, but during communion, we should be reverent and focused on the sacrifice Christ made for us. If you're doing anything else during communion, you shouldn't be.

Communion is a time when you repent of your sins, ask Christ's forgiveness, and remember the Savior's incredible, sacrificial love for us. It's a time when you are spiritually renewed. It's sacred. Don't take it lightly.

Some Don'ts

The last thing I want to do is wag my big fat finger at you, but here are a few things you definitely don't want to do during church. First, don't sit where you know you're going to be distracted, like by a talkative friend or a bunch of noisy kids. Choose your seat wisely.

Second, don't use your phone. Unless people ask for their baptism and you want to spread the news, I don't see a reason for texting during church. Or checking the football scores. Priorities, people.

Third, don't talk more than you listen. If you're chit-chatting with friends during the meeting, texting or writing notes back and forth or anything else, how can you focus on the message God has? Church is a communal thing, and we should feel like a group, but it shouldn't be an easy, breezy social hour, either.

I hope you can try at least one of these suggestions next Sunday. I

want you to come to church with the expectation of getting something good out of it. The Lord is waiting to bless us, but we have to do our part by paying attention, participating, and focusing our mind on what he has for us.

Reflect

Receiving a blessing from a church meeting is *your* responsibility. Answer the following questions to get an idea of where you are and how you can go to church with the right perspective.

Do you have a good attitude about going to church? Is it exciting or just a chore?

Do you expect to get something out of a church service? Or do you expect to just sit there?

For you, is church more about what you get or what you give?

Who in your branch is happiest to be there? Why?

Who in your branch is always glum and depressed on Sunday? Why?

Do you regularly pray for your branch leadership?

What God-given talents can you bring to a church service?