

The “Lone Wolf” Christian

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There's never been a time when the necessity of church and fellowship has been called into question as much as today. I passed by a table of books one day and saw a title that struck me as odd. The title seemed to insinuate that there was a way to follow Christ without ever meeting together with the church body. To be fair, I haven't read the book so I could very well have misunderstood it. But I have encountered this attitude many times in social media and in person. The attitude of disillusionment with “established” religion and a kind of contempt towards formalized worship. The mantra is everywhere: “Christianity is a relationship, not a religion.”

True... but it is a relationship that *includes* a religion. And part of this religion is meeting together with a body of believers, sitting under gospel preaching, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. These core things shouldn't be replaced or seen as unnecessary.

Yes, many churches have been disappointing. There have been schisms, scandals, frauds and embarrassments. But the answer is not to swing to the opposite end of the spectrum, reject church life altogether and adopt a “lone wolf” Christianity. Not only is this completely against scripture ([Hebrews 10:24-25](#)), but also it is detrimental to a healthy walk with Christ. When we're walking this path alone, we're actually starving ourselves of so many benefits.

It starves us of accountability.

Accountability is a strong word. There seems to be a thin line between living under accountability and living under scrutiny. No one likes to be watched, especially by “church folk.” But let's face this bit of honesty: we can't take care of ourselves. One of the root principles of being a Christian is that we understand we are weak. We need accountability. We need brothers and sisters who love us enough to warn us, rebuke us

even, when we stray or backslide. This cannot be found anywhere other than a community of Christians in a church.

It starves us of encouragement.

On the flip-side, when we are apart from the Body of Christ we are cut off from affirmation and encouragement. We may be doing very well in our walk with Christ, upheld by the grace of God, but the toil and the hardships can still weigh heavily on us, causing discouragement. When we separate ourselves from brothers and sisters in Christ we are separating ourselves from the comfort they can offer, the validation that Christ is sufficient, and the encouragement to stand up and carry on in faith.

It keeps us from witnessing the work of the Holy Spirit among His people and experiencing Christ in the lives of other Christians.

How many times have you seen two people who did not get along finally come together in forgiveness because of Christ? Or fellow Christians finally emerging victorious over a sin that had plagued their lives? When we cut ourselves off from this fellowship, we cut ourselves off from the corporate blessings of the Holy Spirit working among His people.

It starves us of Biblical teaching.

It really isn't enough to do our own Bible reading and "quiet times." We need to be taught doctrine from a minister of the gospel. Someone who has dedicated his whole life to studying and expositing the scriptures. In the Bible we never see personal study replace preaching and church attendance. In fact, the Apostle Paul spent most of his life concerned with the welfare and spiritual lives of his fellow preachers. We cannot afford to refrain from sitting under Biblical teaching in church.

It keeps us from sharing our gifts with other Christians and makes us virtually useless in Kingdom work.

"Lone wolf" Christians are at a disadvantage when it comes to exercising their gifts. When we set ourselves apart from the rest of the church we are actually taking ourselves out of the battlefield and working in a place God did not call us to. In military terms, we are disregarding orders. We may be practicing our talents and doing great and good things, but outside of the context of the Body of Christ it is irrelevant. In a body, the eye must remain the eye and do what an eye is supposed to do. If the eye leaves the body, it is useless. In the same way, each member of the Body of Christ is to remain in the Body and accomplish within the Body what they are called to accomplish. We have to remember something that the cross of Christ accomplished: He abolished the individual. "... you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." [1 Peter 2:5 NKJV](#). We are the bricks and mortar of a house, little parts of a greater whole. Our identity is no longer *self*, but we have been given a new and greater identity in Christ. We can't afford to separate ourselves from this "spiritual house." If we do, we're

just useless stones lying on the ground all by ourselves. Christ died so that we could live in this new identity. We cannot reject it.