

“I go to church (even while on vacation) because of the relationships I have with the people and the **personal desire to grow** in my relationship with Christ.”

## Do You Take a Vacation?

By Rod Whitlock

A few weeks ago I took a two-week vacation. My parents were coming into town for my daughter’s graduation and I wanted to have some time to get everything together.

Sunday came and I was looking forward to attending church with my family, followed by lunch and a leisurely day at an amusement park. What I wasn’t ready for was the greeting I received walking to the sanctuary.

“What are you doing in church today?” one said. “I thought you were on vacation.”

A few moments later I was met with, “Why are you here? Aren’t you taking some time off?”

I must admit the thought of taking Sundays off hadn’t crossed my mind.

Do people take vacation from church? From God?

I know what you’re thinking. They’re not the same. You can miss church and it doesn’t mean you no longer love God, and for the most part I would agree with you. Not for a moment do I believe that God has nothing better to do than to sit in heaven with a Jupiter-sized clipboard recording our church attendance.

Yet it seems we have swung the proverbial pendulum in the other direction with great force. It’s almost as if individuals attend church out of convenience rather than out of commitment. I don’t love my wife only when it’s convenient. I love her because of a commitment.

I know some of you are thinking how legalistic this sounds. I know, I know—I sound old-fashioned and out of touch with culture. Some may even think I’m in religious bondage.

### **It’s not religion; it’s relationship.**

I go to church (even while on vacation) because of the relationships I have with the people and the personal desire to grow in my relationship with Christ. Acts 2:46 tells us that every day the followers met together. I don’t believe it was out of duty or obligation but rather out of desire.

### **It’s not legalism; it’s legacy.**

You see, my wife needs, and wants I might add, a man who spiritually leads

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by example. You've heard it before, but going to church doesn't make me a Christian any more than going to McDonald's makes me a hamburger. Yet, by attending church, I'm modeling the behavior I desire to see in my children—children committed to loving God and loving people.

Going to church reminds me I need a Savior, to hear His Word and to be challenged to grow spiritually. Going to church reminds me that I need the body of Christ—that I can't run this race alone.

Please understand there are times when for one reason or another we can't make it to church. Again, my heart is not to appear legalistic. I'm just saying next time you're on vacation or it's a gorgeous day, ask yourself, "Can I afford to miss this opportunity to be strengthened, encouraged and enjoy relationships with the Body?"

Later that Sunday—you know the one during my two-week vacation when we went to church as a family, along with my parents—we went to an amusement park. We could have gone to the park earlier but I didn't want to miss out on church. So we delayed our outing a few hours. It was a great day.

I don't have to go to church when I'm on vacation. This became apparent by the line of questioning I was barraged with a few Sundays ago. Maybe you're right. I don't have to. I choose to.

And I can't begin to express how grateful I am that God spends His summer vacation with us.

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