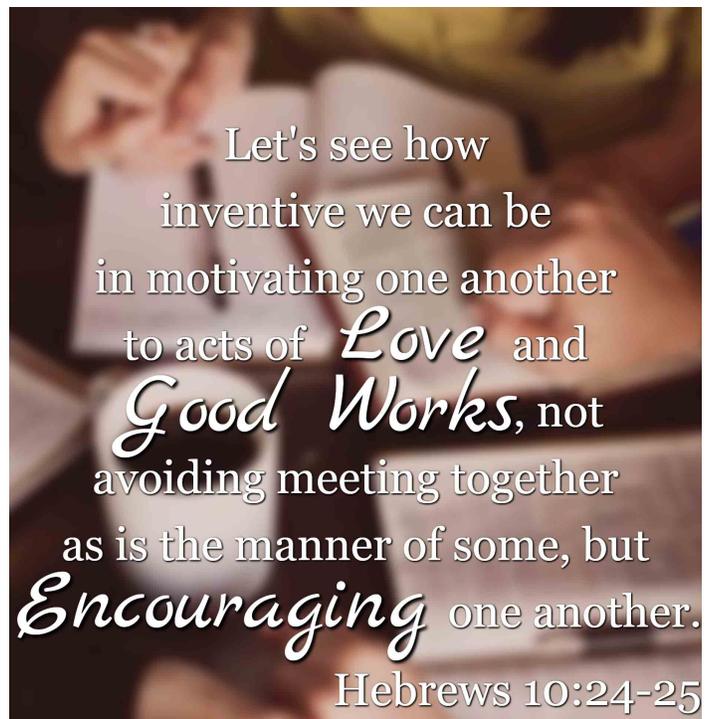




For generations it seemed that church was just the thing you did as a family. I know for me growing up it was what you did on a Sunday. While many people saw it as an obligation or their duty that was not the case at our house, it was a priority for my parents. For so long, I didn't really question, I just did what I was told, I tried to make excuses but they were not going to work. But that has all changed now . People started asking questions, they started to find other things to take the place of church. The idea that you don't have to go to church to be a Christian is flooding society, and it's doing so because many churches relied on the wrong motivation. Because if you rely only on obligation then it will soon lose its appeal. I want us to think of church attendance like doing good things. If our motivation for doing the good things is to try and earn salvation or prove ourselves worthy of God, then those things are worthless. If our motivation for those good things is to demonstrate our love for God then they become the fruits of our faith. You see our motivation changes everything. Good works cannot earn us salvation, they are just our natural response to salvation. I believe that Church attendance works in the same way. When we make it about being an opportunity to grow closer to God, to develop our relationship with him and his people, then it will stop being a chore to being a thing we look forward to. If you read Acts 2 it tells us that the Church was devoted to the fellowship of believers. Also we read in Hebrews 10:24-25: And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all

the more as you see the Day drawing near. The clear message here is the same today, as it was for the early church. The people of God, that's you and me, should be invested in the community of God and make church a priority. Now let's be clear, I know the church is full of broken, messed-up people, I'm one of them and I know the church can be challenging. It can also be frustrating as well but how can we ever improve the church if we don't stay and fight for it and invest in it? Just imagine if all the doctors stopped going to hospitals because they realized how sick people were. Who would treat those sick people? Who would help them get better? If the people who recognize the problems avoid them, how will problems ever get fixed?



I love the Church. I know it's not everything it should be. It's definitely not perfect that's for sure. Yet in its imperfection it has been the source of more growth in my life than any other relationship I've had and has shaped me into the person I am today. What is it, that keeps people from seeing the church community as a priority and something that is worth sacrificing for? While church isn't perfect, it is the place that God chooses to display His amazing power and love. The more we invest in it, the more we will see the power of God at work in it and his love pouring out from it through us. The more we commit to be regular in worship and the more we experience being part of God's family we will discover real unconditional love and support there. I see it week by week at FPC. People going out of there way to support those who are in need, those who are sick or those who are just going through challenging times. We need to more of this, we need to display God's love for all to see through our actions.

This was the model of the early church and as they lived out authentic Christian lives then God blessed them and added to their numbers. Let it be our prayer that as we live out our lives in total commitment to God we will see others being added to the kingdom of God daily. It is possible. It just needs our commitment!