

Why don't people attend worship services? Some bullet points, in no particular order, some of which combine with and build on each other:

- **don't want to**
  - our task: to ask and learn why
  - maybe someone wants to go to church, but not as much as they want to do something else: coffee and read, sleep in, go to the beach, kids' soccer, etc.
  - church is boring? (either actually, or perceived)
- **aren't able to**
  - ability/disability-related reasons
  - accessibility challenges: transport, having to work an inflexible job on a Sunday, not having a spouse or family interested in going, etc.
- **don't feel safe** (*aren't safe*)
  - in particular, due to being abused by someone at/from church, whether physically, spiritually, or otherwise
  - church drama and church trauma—both are real and painful
  - burned out on the whole church experience
- **aren't even thinking about church** (Romans 10:14: "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?")... this points to the need for sharing the good news with others
- **disincentivized by Christians**
  - we may fail to be warm and welcoming
  - we may not be culturally sensitive or trauma-informed
  - we may be well meaning but say less than helpful things (e.g., "God doesn't give you more than you can handle.")
  - we may not be intentional with our connection/discipleship pathway (e.g., [here](#))
  - we may not be giving people Jesus!
- **Church's reputation** (deserved or not)
  - e.g., reputation of being close-minded, shallow, brainwashing, homophobic, sexist, politically bought off, etc.
- **larger cultural forces**
  - individualism: idea that "I don't need other people to be spiritual"
  - "have it your way": piece together one's own spirituality without restrictions and commitments of a church
  - COVID: idea that "During COVID, I realized I didn't really need church anyway."
  - mistrust of institutional authority (and of the Church specifically)
- **spiritual forces**
  - I'd want to be wise and discerning in how we talk about this, but surely there is a spiritual battle—seen and often unseen—that influences if/when/how people come to church
  - are there ways we churches are quenching the Holy Spirit?

There are more reasons, including ones I'm not aware of or am slow to admit to, as a long-time churchgoer and pastor! I want to be open to learning here. I asked a dear friend of mine—who doesn't go to church anymore—why he doesn't, and he just sent me [this](#).