

Blog



Back to Church

“Autonomous Christianity never works, because our spiritual life was designed by God to be a community project.” (Paul David Tripp)

The past year has been challenging in many ways, not least because of the restrictions and isolation brought about in response to the coronavirus pandemic. For Christian believers whose lives are so closely connected with the local church community, this has been especially difficult. Digital innovation has enabled a degree of engagement, and in many places has facilitated this successfully. Yet the church family is by definition a gathered community that is required to assemble.

Restrictions in the UK are being eased and the population is navigating the roadmap out of lockdown. As venues where people gather reopen, the opportunity for churches to meet for in person worship without curbs or restraints is almost here. But will all the people return?

Now is perhaps an appropriate time to remind ourselves of why being actively immersed in a local church community is so important. “Just as you must eat, drink, and breathe to live, you must be involved in a church to stay spiritually alive and vital.” (Greg Laurie)

The Psalmist paints a word picture of those who deliberately plant themselves in the house of God, likening them to a strong, healthy tree that grows, flourishes and is full of life.

“They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green.” (Psalm 92:13)

Are you planted firmly in a local church? Here are some reasons why we all should be.

Planted people flourish – *“they flourish in the courts of our God.”*

In the soil of spiritual fellowship planted people thrive. Isolation saps spiritual life and cuts off the supply of support, encouragement and growth. Christian community fosters all the positive elements that produce spiritual health. “Fellowship means that we are ready to receive of Christ from others. Other believers minister Christ to me, and I am ready to receive.” (Watchman Nee) Planted people flourish.

Planted people are fruitful – *“they still bear fruit in old age.”*

In a healthy spiritual community planted people are fruitful. The goal for every believer is to bear fruit, more fruit and much fruit (John 15). In the interaction that comes from being planted in a local church family our character is moulded and shaped into the image of Christ. By active engagement with a local church community our gifts are enhanced as we serve and bear fruit. Planted people are fruitful.

Planted people are full – “*they are ever full.*”

In regular communion with other believers planted people begin to experience fullness of life. Jesus’ promise of life in abundance was not given to a lone lamb, but rather to sheep who were part of a flock (John 10). We will not experience a full life on our own. But we begin to enjoy every spiritual blessing in the companionship of others. Planted people are full.

“The church isn’t just a particular building or congregation but the spiritual fellowship of all who belong to Jesus Christ. If we belong to Christ, we also belong to each other.” (Billy Graham) As a new chapter of freedom dawns and church worship services and ministries reopen fully, engage and be intentional about getting planted in the house of God. Planted people flourish, planted people are fruitful and planted people are full.