

How To Prepare For Revival

Paul Chappell | Jan 20, 2012 | Christian Life

I was saved in 1972, and since then, I've been to more revival services than I can remember. Over the years, I have found there to be a common delineator between the revivals when I sense God's mighty work in my heart and the revivals when I haven't. The key? Preparation.

I suggest three ways to prepare before revival services.

Pray

Before the first sermon is preached, earnestly seek God's face. Sometimes we forget how desperately we need revival. Without even realizing we're doing it, we excuse away our own carnality and the distance that has grown between us and the Lord.

Ask the Lord to use the revival to make your heart thoroughly right with Him. Ask Him to search your heart and try your ways. Ask Him to convict you of sin or spiritual apathy and to stir your heart for Him. Tell Him that you want to hear from Him in the meetings and that you intend to obey in any area that He convicts or directs.

Plan

From a strictly practical standpoint, attending four evening services isn't part of most Christians' normal week. If it is going to happen, it requires a little advance planning to cover all the bases. Think through your schedule. Plan quick evening meals (a good ol' peanut butter sandwich may be what you need). Plan and prepare the clothes you and your children will need for the week. Put gas in the car in advance. Refuse to allow small, easily anticipated details to keep you from the services.

Another aspect of planning is to choose ahead to willingly accept the inconveniences of several nights away from home. You and your family may be physically drained at the end of the week, but the spiritual benefit more than compensates for it. Second Corinthians 4:6 reminds us, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

Prepare your heart

Far too often, a preacher has to take the first several minutes of his sermon time just to pull the congregation into a spiritually receptive frame of mind. Before the service even begins, focus your heart toward hearing from God. Resist the distractions that come to your mind, and tune your attention to God's Word.

Our church's revival services have shifted over the years—intentionally. In our early years, we spent more time before the service in singing, announcements, and fellowship. Now, we include just a few revival-focused songs and get right into the preaching. This allows for more time of preaching, but it also requires people to come with already-prepared hearts.

It seems that regardless of the service schedule or the preacher's ability, there will always be some who leave saying, "I didn't get much out of that service." In every case when someone has said that to me, I have found on closer questioning that it wasn't the preacher's fault. There is no substitute for coming to church with a hungry, expectant heart.

Many churches have given up on scheduling revival services. It seems that busy schedules and spiritual apathy have won over earnest Christians seeking the face of God. I'm thankful we still have revival. I'm thankful God still speaks to my heart in the meetings.

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