

# Should Family Really Come Before Church?



Ever do one of those "make-a-list-of-priorities" exercises? In church settings, they always start out the same:

1. God
2. Family
3. Church

The variation kicks in with #4 and beyond: some will list school, work, Alabama football, Fido the family dog, tacos, or who-knows-what.

Can we go back to the first three on our list?

The lordship of Christ demands that God be listed as our #1 priority. If anyone is tempted to list something else, then he is not living under the lordship of Christ. He has let the idolatry of something else take precedence.

But what should be #2 on the list? **I don't think family should come before church.** (*Did he really just say that??*) I'm not proposing church take precedence over family; I'm arguing they should be side-by-side.

**1. The greatest thing we can do for our families is to bring them to faith in Christ—and walk beside them in growth and discipleship.**

*"These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deut. 6:6-7).*

**2. As Christians, we are not alone in our walk with Christ. In fact, we are commanded not to go it alone. We are to help and support each other.**

*"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:24-25).*

**3. You have a physical family, and in Christ, you have a spiritual family. The two go hand-in-hand.**

I am not endorsing centering family life around church-related activities. Activities do not always equal discipleship. But our families need to be faithfully and consistently plugged in with other Christians in a way that fosters worship, spiritual growth, and positive connections with other Christians.

What are we communicating to our kids when we let Sunday sports events and sports leagues take precedence over worship and Bible study?

Vacations and time-away is valid, but what are we communicating to our kids when we make a Sunday morning spur-of-the-moment decision to stay home because we simply don't feel like going?

**Church and connections to the body of Christ are not optional for the family.**

Please don't read any legalism into my words, but I am concerned about an attitude that makes church a priority only when it fits our schedule.



Through the prophet Haggai, God rebuked the Jews because they had made the rebuilding of His temple a low priority. *Yeah, but that means God was the low priority, not the "church."* Nice try, but it's more than that.

Failing to rebuild the temple reflected more than just their attitude toward God; it reflected their attitude toward the community of faith. The temple was the place of offerings, sacrifices, and worship—and these are things the community was to do *together*.

Our attitude toward the community of faith—the body of Christ—directly mirrors our attitude toward God. So if we truly want our families to occupy the number #2 spot on our list of priorities, then we need to put the community of faith right next to it. Because if we are not working to integrate our families deeply into the community of believers—those who can support us in our walk and discipleship—we are not providing a critical component to our families' development.

**Value your family? Then value their connection to Christ and His body.**