



How to Walk into Church

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If you've been a churchgoer for more than just a few Sundays, walking to church probably doesn't seem like it deserves its own 'how to' manual. Right? In fact, it most likely seems like a pretty straightforward and trivial weekly activity.

But things are rarely as simple as they seem, and how you walk into church reveals a great deal about what you think church is, what it's for, and what you think you're doing there.

In *How to Walk into Church*, Tony Payne helps us think biblically about church. Along with giving plenty of other practical advice, he suggests a way to walk into church that beautifully expresses what church is and why you're there - a way that every Christian can master.

If you go to church, this Brief Book is for you.

How to Walk into Church Details

Date : Published June 8th 2015 by Matthias Media

ISBN : 9781922206725

Author : Tony Payne

Format : Paperback 64 pages

Genre : Christian, Religion, Theology, Church, Nonfiction, Christian Living, Christianity, Ecclesiology

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From Reader Review How to Walk into Church for online ebook

Don Curran says

A great reminder of what church should be and how we are to love God, love people, serve others, and tell everyone. Good, practical advice on what to do and how to love, encourage, and build up others in the faith.

Elaine says

Fast, easy read.

Audrey Jost says

A very short, excellent exhortation to be intentional and Biblical in how we walk into church each Sunday. Very encouraging and convicting book that truly stirs up the heart to love and good works!

Omar says

This little book could be summed up by saying that everything we do “at church“ (beginning with choosing where to sit) should be done conscientiously through prayer, and not thoughtlessly or as a mindless habit.

Josh says

For a small treatment of what the church is, and is called to do in gathered worship, this little book packs serious punch. I'm giving it out to everybody...

Finished again on 7/26/17. Such a helpful little book. Worth many reads.

Kevin Halloran says

Read full review at LeadershipResources.org or buy on Amazon.

How do you walk into church?

This question doesn't seek to address your walking style, how many kids' noses you are wiping as you cross your church's threshold, or how you have on your “Sunday best.”

What author Tony Payne is getting at in his brief 64-page book *How to Walk into Church* are core issues like “What is church?” and “What is my place in it?” (10). Our answers to these two questions form a mindset that will govern all of our conversations and activities in church; from greeting the greeter—to choosing a

pew—to conversations scattered throughout your time on Sunday morning—to what we do before and after attending a church service.

One of the lies Payne seeks to shatter in this short and accessible book is that ministry is for paid church staff and not the everyday attender. This book is a practical guide to how every church attender can minister on Sunday mornings (or whenever their church gathers). Chapters include what church is, our role in church, the before, during, and after of church attendance, and how church doesn't ever "end" (among other chapters).

As is so often the case, Tony Payne makes his vision painfully easy to implement by sharing practical tips we can all put into practice. Here are a few examples:

Payne recommends to pray about where to sit as you walk into church, which shows we are "trusting that what we do at church really matters; that God has something important for us to do—in particular, someone he wants us to sit next to, talk with, listen to, pray for and encourage." (13)

When you meet a new person, look for them in future weeks and seek to reconnect and help them get plugged in. (49)

After church, encourage those around you with the Biblical truth presented earlier that day. (See Colossians 3:16) (52-53)

Before you enter church, pray that God would use you to encourage people that day, and pray throughout your day for opportunities. (53)

Be a good host to newcomers by listening to their story, introducing them around, or inviting them to a meal. (55)

Payne clearly and succinctly lays out a biblical vision of church that has personal growth in Christ and disciple making at the forefront. This book takes the DNA of the mindshift presented in *The Trellis and the Vine* and boils it down specifically for church goers and their Sunday morning experience.

You can use this book in a variety of ways. First of all, every church-goer would benefit reading it for reasons stated above. Because of that, many pastors will find it helpful as they seek to train up leaders who can minister by prayerfully speaking the Word of God to others on Sunday morning and throughout the week, especially if they have a ministry team looking to care for people and welcome new attendees. Small groups will find this a fruitful discussion starter to encourage members toward a greater vision of their individual parts in "every member ministry." This is also a valuable book for pastors to give to new members.

After readers get a greater sense of what church is and their place in it by reading *How to Walk into Church*, I imagine that many will never walk into church the same way again.

Steve Hemmeke says

Written for the average church-goer, Payne gives biblical and practical advice on keeping church attendance an act of deliberate discipleship.

What is church?

Why go?

What should I be thinking about when I go?

I'll give away the main idea: we should go to church expecting to help someone else with our encouraging words, loving presence or acts of service.

Payne does a good job in 64 short pages keeping church God-oriented, while also asserting this main idea. It is a practical and edifying challenge for both new and seasoned believers.

Eric Durso says

Would love for lots of people to read this short book.

Peter N. says

Most of my church is under thirty years old. They are not going to pick up a 300 page book on a topic. Therefore, I am constantly trying to find short reads that will help them understand better God, Christ, the Spirit, and the church. This book does a great job of giving clear reasons why someone should go to church, what they should do when they get there, and when they leave. It is not a guilt trip, but rather a practical and encouraging book on the glories and benefits of belonging to and participating in the body of Christ. One of my friends suggested it for new members and it is perfect for that. But it is also good for long time members who might have forgotten the reasons they attend.

Andrea says

I appreciate this little book for the its encouragement to really understand and walk by the principles that God has given about how Christians "do" church. The author writes, "How you walk into church will be determined by what you think church is, and what you think you're doing there."

The author gives a quick, but great foundation for how the church came to be and why, based on that, we should seek to fulfill God's purposes and not our own. He writes that "We can make our way through church with a true and wise understanding of just what church is, what it really happening there, and what the situation demands of us. Or we can stumble along not really knowing why we are there or what we are doing."

He makes the argument that since church is where so much of what is essential happens, that we should be pursuing a right mindset before, during and after our time spent with other believers and that that will not only equip us to be more effective at church, but in the rest of our Christian walk ("we should walk out of our local churches encouraged and stirred up to love and good works, ready to live for Christ and speak for Christ in every facet and sphere of our lives").

This is a really quick read. It's a great primer for people who may have never understood church to be more than an obligation or club, and it's a great refresher for anyone who ever struggles to remember that God has orchestrated the church "and even though that family is often hard to live with, and is full of sinful people just like us...well, they're still family, and we still have the obligation and privilege to love and serve them (and we still need them to do the same for us)."

Some of my favorite points:

1. "We need to come to church each week as grateful, loving, other-person oriented members of God's people, read not only to encounter God and respond to him, but to encounter our brothers and sisters and love

them as well." The author encourages the readers to be praying about where to sit...something we usually take for granted each week.

2. "Church is not a kind of trade-off between the 'vertical' and the 'horizontal' - between the 'vertical' actions of encountering God and the 'horizontal' activities of talking with and encouraging each other. You cannot separate the two. In fact, it is often very hard to figure out which parts of our church life are 'vertical' and which 'horizontal'...What we do in church is a constant interplay between encountering God and encountering people."

3. If we begin to grasp this, we won't see the informal coffee time as an awkward social time to escape from, nor as a chance to simply catch up on the latest with our friends. We will see it for what it is: a place where God is still present in the midst of us, leading us to love and encourage one another through this world."

4. We need to be in prayer about what happens while we're together. "Since God is in charge of church (as he is in charge of everything), he is the one to go to if we want our time at church to be fruitful and encouraging and God-glorifying - not only for ourselves but also for our whole church family."

5. "One of the most important acts of love and encouragement we can all engage in is the powerful encouragement of just being there - because every time I walk into church, I am wearing a metaphorical t-shirt that says, 'God is important to me, and you are important to me. And on the back it says, 'And that's why I would dream of missing this.'"

6. "The most basic reason we got to church is simply that we belong together around God."
"We're walking into a gathering that God himself has called together, as part of his majestic plan to save and gather his people around the Lord Jesus Christ. We're walking into outpost or foretaste of the great spiritual, heavenly assembly of the people of God."

7. "So this is God's majestic purpose in Christ: to save and redeem and gather around himself a people from every nation, to give them confident access to his own presence, and one day to reveal that mighty assembly of his people in the new creation. In other words, God's purpose in Christ is to build his church."

8. "God's extraordinary purpose in Christ was not just to save you and me through the once-for-all work of Christ, but also to save and gather a great congregation of people for himself. To put it another way, when we stand forgiven before God through the work of Christ, we don't stand alone. As we enter God's presence with confidence, we find ourselves in a vast company of forgiven sinners, just like us, who have been cleansed and justified through the blood of Jesus. There's a whole family of us who can now draw near to God with dumbfounded joy on our faces and the name of Jesus on our lips."

9. Instead of hoping that church "will repay the investment we are making by being here on Sunday morning instead of sleeping in," We acknowledge that "God is in charge of every aspect of church, and that our ideas and preferences and dreams about what church should be like come a distant second."..."We're also putting ourselves in the right frame of mind towards each other. We have started to think about church as being about someone other than me."

There's a lot of great stuff packed in this little book. Our churches would be different places if we could all work toward rooting this truth in our hearts...starting with me!

Tracey says

A helpful little 64-page book reminding (or exhorting) us that church is not just about the sermon or what we get out of it. As Payne points out, our individual "vertical" experience with God is only half the reason for church and we must not neglect the "horizontal" aspect, searching out "opportunities to encourage and love and build up other people" (p. 52), that is, fellowshiping with our church family. Payne helps the reader think through why we go to church and the manner in which we should approach it before, during, and after.

Tori Samar says

I would call this 64 pages of "just what I needed to read." An incredibly short book (it didn't even take me an hour to finish), but oh, how much it got hold of me in that brief time! Payne boils his main idea down to one statement: we should pray each week about where we sit in church. However, the book's not simply trying to say "Change where you sit each week in church, and the results will be life-changing." It's really trying to emphasize the church as community and family, the mindset involved with that, and practical ways we can truly (not superficially) minister to one another when we assemble together.

As an American (born and raised in an individualistic culture), Northerner (often closed-off and treasuring privacy), and introvert (loving to "recharge" through alone time), this book greatly resonated with and convicted me. To "walk into church" each week as Payne describes--which includes things like praying for specific opportunities to edify someone and actively thinking about how to stir up others to love and good works--does not come naturally to me. If we're being honest, it doesn't come naturally to most (otherwise, why would this book even exist?). In fact, it's incredibly difficult! But the Bible makes it clear that God doesn't intend us to live out our Christian lives in isolation. The church is a family. Assembling *together* for worship is part of God's design. We need one another. We have to get our eyes off ourselves and onto our brothers and sisters in Christ. Therefore, we need to know "how to walk into church" every week.

Immensely thought-provoking book, with real-life ramifications for those willing to listen and act. Read it and encourage others to do the same!

CJ Bowen says

So much wisdom packed into a few short chapters. The strength of this book is not that it is new or groundbreaking, but that it is clear, accessible, and practical. If you wonder why you go to church, or if you struggle to feel connected with the church you attend, this book will serve you well, explaining why and how going to church can be so much more than going through the motions. This would be a great resource to give to new members as an introduction to the first steps of what it means to be part of a church.

Bill says

Very helpful. There's a lot in this readable little book (64 pages, ~\$5). It's a super practical book about how Christians should act in church Sunday by Sunday -- preparing to come, during church, and afterwards -- all

based on bible passages and well-explained theology. Any church attender would be encouraged by reading it, and would take away some specific things to do. There's also a very good couple of pages near the end on the danger of drifting away from church.

Kofi Opoku says

Excellent! Tony Payne has given me the words for something that I've been thinking about for a while now. He makes the case that 'going to church' begins long before you actually put on your clothes and walk out of the door. Likewise, being in church is more than listening to he sermon for that day. Highly recommended.
