



Why do we have to do this?

"This" could refer to just about anything. But here, "this" refers to "taking time to worship God on Sunday."

It's a good question. An honest question. A question that came at a time the questioner didn't feel like doing "this." Chances are good that this is a question you've also asked - if not out loud, then certainly somewhere in the back of your mind. It's a question you've asked when you didn't feel like going to worship that day. And chances are pretty good that you have also *answered* the question - at least unconsciously - with an "I *don't* have to do this, because...." (Fill in your own favorite excuse).

So, why *should* we gather together to worship God on a weekly basis?

"Together" is a key word. It is true that we can worship God individually in all that we do, when we do things with God in mind. But God has instructed us to worship "together" one day out of every seven. As He reminds us in Hebrews 10:25

"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Why do we have to do this? As simply-put as possible: Because God said we should.

Remember the third commandment? That one about the Sabbath Day? God designed us to need one day out of every seven to take time out from work to rest and to "recharge our spiritual batteries" by gathering together for worship. It seems we don't have too much trouble with the "taking time out from work" part. It's the "taking time out for worship" part of the Sabbath commandment that seems difficult.

Maybe it helps to hear what God promises for taking time out to worship Him:

"If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, [14] then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob." The mouth of the Lord has spoken. Isaiah 58:13-14

God tells us to take time out to worship him each week, because LIFE GOES BETTER WHEN WE DO. He promises that we will find true joy when we do - joy that lasts. He promises great blessings.

So, "Why do we have to do this?" NOT to earn special "brownie points" with God. (Jesus earned for us all the "brownie points" we ever need when he died for us).

We do it out of gratitude for God and all that He's given and done for us (especially what He did on the cross). We do it because He told us to. We do it because God designed life to simply "go better" when we do.

As I said to someone recently, "Think of it this way: What if you *couldn't* get together with other believers and worship God? What if it was not allowed in our country? 'Do I *have* to?' would probably change to 'I long for the days when I *got* to.'"

So, the next time that question pops up in the back of your mind, maybe it will help to change one little word: Change "I *have* to," to "I *get* to." You are the one who benefits when you take time for worship. God promised.

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net