

## HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 4/15/2024

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

***ONE AT ONE*** – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, April 16 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for all the places in the world that are involved in war and conflict today, places like Ukraine, Israel, Palestine, Sudan, Cyprus, Libya, Morocco, and Western Sahara. Pray for an end to violence. Ask GOD to send peacekeepers to these places so that just solutions may be found for all who are affected by conflict.*

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Why do you go to church? Is it because of tradition—that's what I've always done? Perhaps it is because someone makes you. Is it out of guilt or in the hope of a blessing from GOD, or at least to ward off any punishment from GOD? Is it out of your love for GOD? Do you anticipate receiving something to help you through the coming week? All of these are reasons that someone might choose to attend church. But I think there is another reason that can help to make coming to worship more meaningful and valuable.

It really begins with the question, "What is worship about?" What is the purpose of worship? Why do we do it? The main reason we worship is simply to get to know JESUS. Have you ever thought about it that way? Have you ever felt that in worship you were getting to know JESUS better? Who HE was and who HE is? What HE wants you to be? How HE feels about you and others?

But why does knowing these things matter? Is it really going to change our lives? Is it going to make a difference in how we live?

The reason we need to know these things is so that we can represent JESUS to the world. There are increasingly few people who know who JESUS truly is. Fewer people have a meaningful relationship with GOD. What that means is that we have not done a very good job of representing JESUS to the world. And it stems from our failure to recognize that this is our calling and that this is why we come to worship.

JESUS had a plan before HE ascended into heaven, a plan that HE shared with HIS followers. This strategy was for HIS followers to share who HE was and is. And it was designed to carry on beyond those who knew HIM personally. Gathering for worship was so that the teaching and example of JESUS would be handed down so that there were always people ready to tell others of the love of GOD, just as JESUS had shared during HIS time on earth.

This past week, JESUS told HIS followers, "You are witnesses." The week before that we heard John summarize his gospel by saying, "These things are written down so that you may come to believe that JESUS is the MESSIAH, the SON of GOD, and that through believing, you may have life in HIS name." We come so that we can get to know JESUS. And equipped with that information, we can represent HIM so that others will know HIM too. By doing this we are helping to ensure that we and others can have the life that JESUS intended, life in HIS name.

In Christ's love,  
Pastor Jeffrey