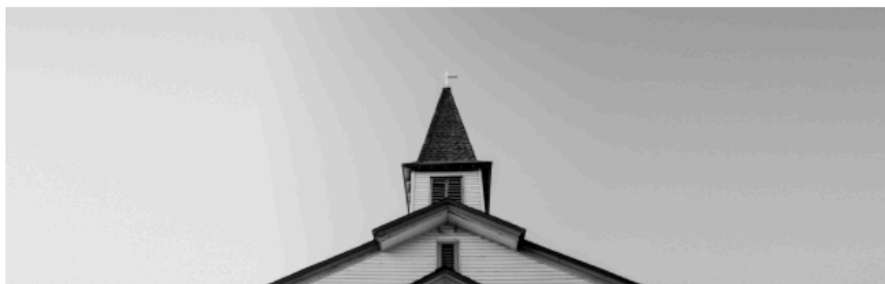


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SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT Hannah Salyer · 6 min read



Is Going to Church Important For My Children?

Mom rushed around the house, busy getting both herself and a 2-year-old ready. Going to church has always been a weekly occurrence for my family, but this morning, unusual events spoiled the normalcy—I shoved Fruit Loops up my nose.

Mom worked to remove them all before leaving, but there wasn't enough time. The reality: I was going to church with cereal in my nose.

So there I was ... sitting in the pew sneezing out rainbows, but nonetheless, I was in church.

Taking your children to church won't always go according to plan. But in the end, it doesn't matter if they look prim and proper or if they squirm and fuss in anticipation for lunch, as long as they're there.

Why should I take my children to church?

I didn't always want to attend youth group in middle school, because I had a hard time making friends and getting along with the other girls. But church—whether Sunday services or youth group on Wednesday—was not optional for my family. So I went, sometimes when I really didn't want to.

Now, I am incredibly grateful I did. I saw how my friends who casually or rarely attended church struggled both spiritually and in their relationship with the church body. I watched friends leave the church as adults because of their lack of involvement when they were younger. I can't imagine what my life would look like had I not been raised going to church, but I can only assume my love for Christ and His people would have diminished.

Going to church is important for both the spiritual and moral formation of a child. Your children are under great influence from the world. Lies about sexuality, gender, and what dictates their identity are presented to them as truth. Sin—such as sex, cheating, and disobeying authority—is made attractive by social media influencers and their peers.

A 2019 study showed children are most susceptible to social influence beginning at age 12 through their teenage years. Laying a biblical foundation through going to church gives your child truth to counter the lies during these impressionable years. Of course, there's no guarantee your child won't make poor decisions and stray. But you wouldn't avoid eating healthy food because one day you might get sick, right? Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."

CAPTIVATE YOUR KIDS WITH GOD'S WORD.

Is going to church as a family important?

As influential as it is for your children to be in church, it is even more so for you to attend with them. Children whose parents go to church with them are more likely to stay in church as adults.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NASB) reminds us to "consider how to encourage one another in love and good deeds, not abandoning our own meeting together, as is the habit of some people, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

I've known many Christian families that attend church together and many that don't. The visible difference in the family dynamics is staggering. There's a closeness that comes from a family attending church together, and that seems to be what's affected the most when not all members of a family are going to church. My family is very close, and I attribute part of that to our common bond and love for church.

When you make church attendance a priority in your home, you're doing so much more than checking a box off your Christian family to-do list. You're acknowledging the value and need of Christian community to your kids that they will carry into adulthood. You're showing your children your faith is genuine. Jesus said others will know you are His disciple "if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

Parents, love on a local body of believers and your children will take notice. They will love what you love. Show them you love the church.

How do I keep my children quiet and still at church?

The Sunday I sat in church with cereal in my nose, I was neither quiet nor still. My sneezes probably distracted someone, but it was nothing that could have been helped.

Much like your infant's cooing or your toddler's restlessness, kids will be kids. They will fuss and wiggle. They will intensely scribble on their coloring pages, making the paper crumble as loud as possible, and they'll laugh loudly at something the pastor says.

There's no perfect formula for keeping your children well behaved in church, but here are some tips:

1. Let them sing and dance as much as they like during worship. This will burn off some energy before they need to sit still for the sermon.
2. Give your child something quiet to do. Coloring books are great as your child will be so focused they will hardly speak. (Maybe.)
3. Be consistent in expectations for your child in church and communicate these clearly. Make sure your expectations for behavior are age appropriate and adjust them as they get older.

How do I get my children excited about going to church?

Excitement is contagious, especially to children. If you show them you enjoy going to church, your children are more likely to enjoy church as well. Avoid making church sound boring. Going to church is exciting. It's a wonderful joy and privilege to worship God. Describing it this way will make it more desirable to your children.

Children's ministry is another great way to get your kids excited about church. Allow them to participate in events where they can make friends they'll look forward to seeing each week.

And don't expect perfection. Maybe your child doesn't have Fruit Loops stuck up their nose, but they're going to church in play clothes, with jelly on their face, or with a backpack full of crayons and coloring pages.

That's okay.

The important thing is they are in church, observing the community and worship, and soaking in the word of God being preached—even when it doesn't seem like it. Children hear and comprehend so much more than we realize. They're little sponges, soaking up every ounce of information around them.

So parents, take your kids to church. Let them soak up Scripture and the praise of His people.

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