

WHY THE CHURCH?

God's Gym for Spiritual Growth

Ephesians 4:16- 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4 teaches us that God designed the church to help us grow. We are not only called to **belong** to a spiritual family; we are called to **become** who God created us to be. Paul says that the body is **"joined and knit together,"** and as every part does its share, the whole body grows and becomes stronger.

Think about someone joining a gym. They do not join simply to say, "I have a membership." They join because they want to become stronger. But strength requires more than membership. You have to **show up, exercise, face resistance, and stay consistent.**

APP: The same is true spiritually. **We don't come to church simply to attend; we come to grow.** God uses His Word, His Spirit, His people, and even the resistance we face to develop spiritual strength within us.

1. STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH

Romans 10:17 says, **"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."**

One reason we need the church is because God wants to strengthen our faith. Faith is our **trust, confidence, and reliance upon God.** It says, "I may not understand everything that is happening, but I trust the God who does."

Life will challenge what we believe. Fear may tell us we are not going to make it. Discouragement may tell us nothing is changing. Our feelings and circumstances may change, but **God's Word remains true.**

That is why gathering together matters. As we worship, pray, hear God's Word, and encourage one another, our faith is strengthened. Sometimes God gives us a Word today that prepares us for a battle tomorrow.

ILL: Like a cell phone that needs to reconnect to power, sometimes life drains us through pressure, problems, and disappointment. We may walk into church discouraged but leave believing again. The situation may not have changed, but **God has changed something inside of us.**

Strong faith develops when God's Word becomes louder than our circumstances.

2. STRENGTHEN US TO BE FAITHFUL

Galatians 6:9 reminds us, **"Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."**

Faith helps us trust God, but **faithfulness helps us keep going when the journey gets difficult.**

Even faithful people get tired. The danger comes when tiredness becomes discouragement and discouragement begins telling us, “What’s the use? Why keep going?”

Paul reminds us that there is a **due season—an appointed time**. There is always a season between planting and harvesting. Just because we cannot see results does not mean God is not working.

ILL: A farmer does not plant seed today and expect a harvest tomorrow. Much of the growth happens beneath the surface. In the same way, God may be working where we cannot see Him, developing our character, patience, endurance, and faith.

Don’t dig up what you just planted because you cannot see the growth.

This is another reason we need the church. When we become tired, spiritual family comes alongside us and reminds us, **“Keep going. God is still working.”** Keep believing. Keep serving. Keep growing. Keep trusting.

Faith gets us started; faithfulness keeps us going.

3. STRENGTHEN OUR FIGHT

Ephesians 6:10 says, **“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”**

Every believer will face battles. Sometimes the fight is temptation, fear, discouragement, offense, or a battle within our mind or family. But Paul does not tell us to be strong in ourselves. He tells us to **“be strong in the Lord.”**

In a gym, muscles grow through resistance. The weight pushing against us forces the muscles to become stronger. In the same way, God can use the resistance of life to develop us. Sometimes we pray, “God, remove this weight,” and sometimes He does. But there are other times when God strengthens us through what we are facing. Difficult relationships can develop patience. Offenses can teach forgiveness. Uncertainty can deepen our trust. Battles can develop spiritual strength that comfort never could.

Don’t waste your resistance. Let God use it to make you stronger.

And when the weight gets heavy, we do not have to lift alone. In a gym, a spotter stands nearby to help when the weight becomes too much. That is a beautiful picture of the church.

Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 reminds us, **“Two are better than one... For if they fall, one will lift up his companion.”**

Sometimes I am your spotter, and sometimes you are mine. **We were never designed to fight alone. We are stronger together.**

4. STRENGTHEN US FOR A STRONG FINISH

Hebrews 12:1–2 tells us to **“run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.”**

The Christian life is not a sprint; it is a race of endurance. Endurance does not mean there will be no pressure. **Endurance means the pressure does not make us quit.**

Paul could say near the end of his life, **“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”** He did not say he had an easy race. He said, **“I finished.”**

A long-distance runner may begin with excitement and energy, but eventually the legs become tired and breathing becomes difficult. That is when endurance matters. The same is true spiritually. We will experience difficult seasons, disappointment, and setbacks, but **a difficult part of the race does not mean the race is over.**

You may be tired but keep running. You may stumble but get back up. You may become discouraged but **keep looking to Jesus.** Whatever has distracted you—hurt, disappointment, failure, or difficulty—bring your attention back to Christ.

A strong finish doesn't require an easy race. It requires endurance with our eyes fixed on Jesus.

GOD IS MAKING US STRONGER

Church, this is why we need the church. **God doesn't just gather us; He grows us.**

- He **strengthens our faith** so we keep believing.
- He **strengthens us to be faithful** so we keep going.
- He **strengthens our fight** so we keep standing.
- And He gives us **endurance to finish strong.**

So, when life gets heavy, don't quit. When you cannot see results, stay faithful. When the battle comes, keep standing. When you become tired, keep your eyes on Jesus. We do not have to walk alone. God has given us His Word, His Spirit, and His church to help us become stronger and more like Christ.

Keep believing. Keep standing. Keep running. Finish strong.