

'PASTOR, EXCUSE US, PLEASE'

Here is an alleged New Year's letter written from a church member to the pastor. Perhaps you know someone who could have written it.

Dear Pastor:

You often stress attendance at worship as being very important for a Christian, but I think a person has a right to miss now and then. I think every person ought to be excused for the following reasons and the number of times indicated ...

- *Christmas holidays (the Sunday before and after), 2.*
- *New Year's (the party lasted too long), 1.*
- *Easter (getaway for the holiday), 2.*
- *July the Fourth (national holiday), 1.*
- *Labor Day (need to get away), 2.*
- *Memorial Day (visit hometown folks), 1.*
- *School closing (kids need a break), 1.*
- *School reopens (one last fling), 1.*
- *Family reunions (mine & wife's), 2.*
- *Sleep late (stayed up too long Saturday night), 9.*
- *Deaths in the family, 2.*
- *Anniversary (second honeymoon), 1.*
- *Sickness (one per family member), 5.*
- *Business trip (a must), 1.*
- *Vacation (three to four weeks), 6.*
- *Bad weather (ice, snow, rain, clouds), 2.*
- *Ball games, 2.*
- *Races, 2.*
- *Unexpected company (can't walk out), 2.*
- *Time change (spring & fall), 2.*
- *Special on TV (Super Bowl, etc.), 3.*

Pastor, that leaves two Sundays per year. So, you can count on us to be in church on the 4th Sunday in February and the 3rd Sunday in August, unless we are providentially hindered.

Sincerely,

A Faithful Member

(more)

While that letter is whimsical, it illustrates the disregard of some for gathering regularly with fellow believers. As might be surmised, pastors hear an array of excuses – these and then some! – from members who miss church services.

Dan Delzell, pastor of Wellspring Lutheran Church in Papillion, Nebraska, writing for the *Christian Post*, identified the benefits of attending a healthy church on a regular basis: (1) you hear the truth spoken in love, (2) you experience Christian friendships which are a source of much spiritual encouragement, (3) you develop spiritually in ways that are not possible by living an isolated Christian life, (4) you maintain a high level of awareness concerning spiritual things going on around you, (5) your family reaps life-changing blessings when you are strong in the Lord, (6) you discover ways God can use you to bless others, and (7) you bring joy to your Lord who instituted His church specifically for His people.

Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:25 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter