

# THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

October 3

2021

## What An Empty Seat Says

You have probably noticed that most of us often sit in the same spot every time we come together for services, and some have even occupied the same seat, every service, for years. Therefore, it usually becomes quite noticeable to many when you are not here in attendance, and many soon begin to ponder about what your empty seat says.

You see, when you are absent from services, your seat speaks for you. For instance, some seats are empty due to sickness. Unfortunately, there are times that we all, like Epaphroditus, will become sick (Philippians 2:25-27), and during those times ones seat will be empty due to physical illness.

Some empty seats speak lukewarmness about those who usually occupy them. Sadly, there are some who are like those Laodiceans of old, and they are neither cold or hot, but rather they are lukewarm in their service to the Lord (Revelation 3:14-16). Think about that. Does your seat ever speak this of you? Are you absent more than you are present because of lukewarmness? Do you just occupy your seat every once in a while in an attempt to keep the brethren from breathing down your neck? Again, I ask, is your seat often empty due to you being lukewarm in your service to the Lord?

Some empty seats speak worldliness. Unfortunately, there are some seats that are empty because those who usually occupy them are

tangled up in the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things (Mark 4:18-19). Is your seat often empty due to you, being like Demas, who loved this present world (2 Timothy 4:10)? Is your seat empty because you chose to go to the ball game, the golf course, the lake, the shopping mall, or to hang out with family and friends instead of attending services? Is your seat empty because you are always working every chance you get in an attempt to fatten your pocket book? Think about that, beware of worldliness (1 John 2:15-17), and do not let your seat become abandoned due to worldliness.

Some empty seats speak apostasy (i.e. abandonment of ones faith). Sadly, there are some empty seats because those who used to occupy them have turned away from the Lord and have departed from the faith (1 Timothy 4:1). However, brethren, may we all beware of apostasy (Hebrews 3:12), and may we never forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some (Hebrews 10:25), always remembering, it would have been better not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from it (2 Peter 20-22). Therefore, when an empty seat is speaking apostasy, let's seek out that one who is missing (Luke 15:4), and let's seek to bring back the erring one (James 5:19-20).

Also, there are some seats that speak death. You see, there are some seats that are empty because those who used to occupy them have kept their appointment with physical death (Hebrews 9:27). Now, although those who have passed on will never fill their seat again, the memory of them will always live on, and we will ponder them in our heart (Luke 2:19). So, always remember brethren, when a fellow brother or sister in Christ dies, and their seat becomes empty, we do not sorrow as others who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13), but rather we rejoice in their hope (Titus 1:2), knowing that blessed are the dead who die in the Lord (Revelation 14:13).

These are just a few things that an empty seat says. So, once more, my beloved brethren, remember, when you're not here, your seat speaks for you!

*✍️ Brad Phillips*

## Looking Forward to Bible Study

“My eyes anticipate the night watches, that I may meditate on Your word.” (Psalm 119:148)

Kids like to go to Bible class. They come into the building and head straight for their classrooms. When they come out they can't wait to show Mom and Dad what they did. I've seen considerable disappointment on some little faces, and at times even tears, when on Sunday evenings they march off to class, only to be told this is not class time.

How about adults? Do we have the same enthusiasm for Bible study? Some do. They always read the text and answer questions ahead of time. Their questions and comments indicate they have been thinking about the text, either forming an opinion or perhaps wondering what something means. Others show less interest. They rarely bring their lesson books, and when they do the book is likely blank. Some are just as likely to be absent as present. They view the worship hour as mandatory but the Bible study hour as optional. When such little value is placed on public study, it would be surprising indeed if much private study takes place.

The psalmist eagerly awaited nightfall, when “the daily grind” ended and he was free to reflect on God's word. What do you do with your spare time?

*✍️ Frank Himmel*

## Consistency

Consistency is a key to success in almost any endeavor. In business, in school, in athletics – in fact, in every conceivable realm -- consistency is fundamental to achieving success. We submit that consistency is also vital to success as a Christian.

There are some who go through periods of high interest and energy. For a time they will attend every assembly. They will speak to neighbors and co-workers about Christianity. They will actively pursue every possible opportunity to do good and serve the Lord.

Then, without apparent cause, these same people will enter into a period of almost total indifference and apathy. They stop attending Bible classes. They frequently miss the worship assemblies. They have no interest in personal work. They stop growing as a Christian and show signs that they are actually becoming much weaker.

Folks who exhibit these “hot & cold” cycles in their service to God will not be successful in the long term. The “lukewarm” results of their inconsistency will not please the Lord. In addressing such Christians He said: “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.” (Revelation 3:16).

We need to be “steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58). Christian, are you consistent? Think!

*✍️ Greg Gwin*

### Belleville church of Christ

5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258

[www.bellevillechurch.net](http://www.bellevillechurch.net)

#### Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study .....	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship .....	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship .....	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study .....	7:00 p.m.

#### Evangelist

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