



MARKDALE BAPTIST CHURCH

To God be the glory

Why an Evening Service?

Our evening service stands as part of a long history of spiritual discipline. It enables us to hallow the whole Lord's Day and enrich ourselves in worship and discipleship to follow Jesus in the week to come. It is one of our church's two main gatherings and open for other area Christians, whose churches don't have evening services, to join with us.

Prior to the 1950s most churches in Ontario had two worship services, one in the morning and another in the evening. The advent of the television changed that and statistics show how TV soon replaced the evening service for many churches. As a result, today, in many church traditions, an evening service is a rarity and even an oddity. While not directly related, the spiritual health of our churches certainly did not benefit from gathering together less frequently (Heb 10:25).

I've worshipped on the Lord's Day on four different continents and have seen services structured many different ways. When I lived in the UK there were 11 healthy churches within a 20 minute drive that had an evening service. I've now worshipped each Lord's Day evening for over a decade and have ensured my five year old son has had the privilege of doing the same—he hasn't known anything other than this crowning rhythm. The evening service is the highlight of my week. While I recognize an evening service is not expressly commanded in Scripture, I believe a divinely appointed day is and that bookending that day with an evening service is a healthy spiritual practice and rhythm, and indeed part of an ancient tradition.

Below are 8 reasons to consider ending the Lord's Day in worship:

- ✓ Bookending the Lord's Day in worship helps to hallow the whole day and prepare us for the coming week. It helps us take full advantage of the day the Lord has given to us;
- ✓ It follows a deep Christian tradition stretching back to the pattern of Temple worship (Ex 29:38-9; Ps 92), through to worship patterns in the early Church (Pliny, Eusebius), Medieval vespers and the post-Reformation practice of gathering in the morning and evening. The evening service is an ancient practice;
- ✓ It affords us a double opportunity and blessing to gather before the Lord and enjoy the gift of His day:
 - To bring Him our worship.
 - To sit under the sound of the Gospel and be built up in the faith (Jude 20).
 - To enjoy Christian fellowship and minister to one another's needs.
 - To enjoy His presence by gathering together in His name—*for where two or three are gathered there I am in their midst* (Mt 18:20).
 - "If we are present where he is present there is no telling what blessing we may enjoy at his hand. We may look for it expectantly."- Unknown

- As we gather around the Lord's Table there is yet another opportunity to express our ongoing commitment to Him and be spiritual nourished by His presence at the Table; and
- ✓ It helps resist the societal tendency to marginalize God.
 - "Are we wiser and better Christians than all those who have gone before us or is it because actually we are succumbing to the secular spirit of our age which marginalizes God? Have we fallen into just doing the minimum" - John Benton

Try it for two months and see if your walk with the Lord isn't strengthened.

My experience is that worshipping the Lord in the evening is a spiritual practice that develops healthy Christians and so builds up churches and so brings honour to the Lord. I'd be glad to answer any of your questions.

The Lord's Sweetest Blessings,

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See you each Lord's
Day at 6 p.m.