

Strengthened Through Community of Believers

During the height of the pandemic, churches developed or enhanced their ability to livestream worship services. This enabled believers to hear God’s Word and worship in the safety of their own homes. At the time, it was the only way for people to view worship services. For some home-bound parishioners, it brought live worship to their homes, perhaps not possible before the upgrade in technology. A downside of the pandemic is that people became less connected – to each other and to God. They became accustomed to worshipping from a distance, if at all.



Thankfully, we are able to be in the presence of other people now. Vaccines and booster shots have made in-person worship available for those who can be in the company of others.

Think back to when you attended a major event that had a big crowd. Experiencing the event as part of a large gathering probably made it even more memorable. For me, I remember being part of a sold-out crowd in the Georgia Dome, at the 1996 Olympic games. My family and I witnessed the Kerri Strug vault that won the Olympic team gold medal for the United States gymnastic team. Because of an injury suffered on her first attempt, Kerri had to “stick the landing” *on one foot* for the US to be assured of the gold. Although we were too far away to hear the words of her coach, Bella Karolyi, you could visually see him encouraging her: “You can do it, Kerri; you can do it!” The Georgia Dome erupted when she stuck the one-footed landing. Several hours later, when we reached our overnight accommodations outside Atlanta, we watched the replay on television. Watching the televised broadcast was not as inspiring as being there in person.

Even though we can worship in the privacy of our own homes, being a spectator in front of your computer is not as impactful as worshipping with others. At home, you miss the depth of live music, being face-to-face with worship leaders, and being in the presence of fellow believers in the pews. Your attendance strengthens the experience for others and their presence makes worship more impactful for you. Jesus came to earth to change lives. In-person worship in God’s house is much more likely to be transformative than watching a computer screen, sipping coffee, and potentially being distracted at home.

There will be times when watching live-streamed or video replays are the only option. When traveling, we try to watch our church’s service when we’re out-of-town. If we are not well, we stay at home to protect the spread of viruses to others. But otherwise, there is nothing better than the real thing, sharing fellowship with other believers. Let’s gather with others for memorable, transformative worship.

The Bible Says: *And rejoice before the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name—you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, the Levites in your towns, and the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows living among you (Deuteronomy 16:11)*

Prayer: Dear Lord. We thank you for the technology that allows us to worship when we cannot be physically present. Give us the opportunity to worship in Your house as often as possible. Amen.