

The Summer Slump

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, our risen savior and Lord.

I want to preface this "jotting" by saying this is not intended to be triggering or to induce any guilt. But it is something that I have tried to address in every context I've been at for the last few years - It is what happens to Jesus during the summer. So, I'm going to begin with a general statement or observation.

How can you tell we have an "Americanized version of Jesus?" – Because we take a break from Jesus during the summer.

Let me explain... Again, I'm not looking to add guilt or shame to anyone's life, just observation and commentary. My faith is in a different place than I was 10 years ago with a different sense of urgency to proclaim Christ crucified to as many as we can. So, I'm passionate about this.

I typed in "**summer church patterns**" to Google AI and this is what I got back in return...

"During summer months, church attendance patterns often see a decline due to various factors, including family vacations, increased recreational activities, and shifts in daily routines. Many families prioritize travel and leisure during summer break, which can impact regular church attendance. Additionally, the structured routines of the school year are less prevalent, making it harder for some to maintain consistent church attendance."

Factors Affecting Summer Attendance:

- **Family Travel and Vacations:** With school breaks, families are more likely to travel, visit relatives, or take weekend getaways, which can conflict with traditional church services.
- **Recreational Activities:** Summer brings a wider array of recreational activities, such as youth sports, camping, fishing, and outdoor concerts, that can compete with church attendance.
- **Shifted Schedules and Routines:** The routines that support regular attendance during the school year are less established in summer, making it more challenging for families to maintain consistent church attendance.
- **Volunteer Fatigue:** Many volunteers who serve regularly throughout the year may take summer breaks to rest and recharge, potentially impacting the availability of volunteers during these months.
- **Broader Cultural Shifts:** The summer months often see a cultural shift towards leisure and entertainment, which can impact church attendance patterns.

I guess the thing that struck me is the word "prioritize." The perception (and perhaps reality) is that we prioritize other things ahead of Jesus during the summer (maybe in all seasons). And I get

it, our normal patterns are disrupted for a few months, but what I would like to challenge us all to do is to use that time during the summer to double down on Jesus. We all too often make Jesus, or church, just another “thing” we have to fit into our schedules instead of prioritizing Jesus first and letting the rest fall in line behind Him.

I’m taking this challenge with you as well. I’m asking you to *not* make Jesus an optional part of your life. This summer, take the challenge of prioritizing Jesus. Pray about it. Ask Jesus for help and strength. Double down on your relationship with Him and invest your freer time with Him. You won’t be disappointed, and you will grow in faith and trust and love and grow in opportunities to share Jesus with others.

I look forward to seeing where Jesus is leading us together as a worship community and as a people united in Christ with one mission: ***to point people to Jesus through intentional relationships.***

God loves you and so do I.
Pastor Jay