

# Should I go to church if my parents don't want me to?

An important question for teens in non-Christian families.

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(<http://fevr.net/teen-life/should-i-go-to-church-if-my-parents-dont-want-me-to>)

Being at odds with your parents over anything is a hard place to be. It creates tension at home and it affects nearly every area of your life. But disagreeing with them over your faith takes that tension to a whole other level. When the choice is between honoring God and honoring your parents, how do you make that decision? Where do you even start?

There are a couple of ideas to consider if you find yourself in this situation. Let's start by seeing what the Bible has to say about obeying parents.

## God takes obedience seriously

In 1 John 5:3, the Bible says that loving God is the same thing as obeying God. Colossians 3:20 tells us that when children obey their parents, it makes God happy. Even more, the Apostle Paul told Timothy that he should avoid people who regularly disobey parents. He puts them in the same list as people who make a habit of being unholy, brutal, and unloving (2 Timothy 3:1-5). That's a hardcore list of bad stuff, and regularly disobeying parents ranks right up there with the others.

On the other hand, after Jesus was crucified and returned to heaven, Jewish and Roman leaders constantly tried to force the apostles to stop preaching about Him. They beat them, put them in prison, and killed many of them. How did the apostles respond? "*We must obey God rather than men.*" If they didn't preach about Jesus, they knew they would be sinning against God.

## Is not going to church a sin?

So if the Bible says we should obey our parents, but also says we should obey God first, does that mean not going to church is a sin? Check out Hebrews 10:24-25a (NIV):

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another.

What this verse speaks against is "giving up" on church. Giving up on church would mean that you let less important priorities get in the way, such as sports, jobs or sleeping in, or that you decide that going to church just isn't necessary for whatever reason. So, if you want to go to church but your parents say no, it's not a sin to honor them in that.

## Being a godly witness at home

There's a bigger question in all of this as well. Why don't your parents want you to go to church? Each person's story is different, but if they won't let you go, then your parents probably have some hang ups about God, Christianity, or churches in general. Whatever the reason, you can be sure that they won't feel better about it if you disobey them and go to church anyway.

Instead, show them what a follower of Jesus is really like. Obey like crazy! Let them see how God is changing you for the better. They may eventually tell you their reasons, but don't dwell on that. The important thing is to let your life be an example of Jesus to your parents. Disobedience and arguing don't make for a good testimony.

## Church for those who can't get there

So what do you do when Sunday rolls around? Have church at home! No, it won't be the same, but you do need to protect yourself from what Hebrews 10:25 talks about. Don't give up on church. Make a habit of a prolonged, weekly meeting with God to supplement your daily times with Him. Here are some ideas of what you could do for your "church at home" time:

- **Pray:** Ask God to soften your parents' hearts towards church and to continue to grow your faith without church. Also, ask Him to prepare your heart to worship Him and to understand what you read in the Bible.
- **Worship:** Queue up five or six songs and either meditate silently on the words or sing along.
- **Learn:** Many churches post their sermons each week on their own websites or on YouTube. Some churches even stream their services live.

In addition to having church at home, be on the lookout for students and teachers at your school who are Christians. If you can, find some Christian friends who can support you or a Christian teacher who can mentor you through this time in your life. You can also check student clubs and groups to see if there are any faith-based groups at your school.

Remember, you won't always be living with your parents. One day you will be an adult making these decisions for yourself. At that point, whether or not you go to church will be your responsibility. In the meantime, don't burn bridges now that God may want to use later to bring your parents to a right relationship with Him. Be the best Jesus to them that you can be, and trust God with the results.