

## Transformational Environments: Part 1 - The Gathering - John 6

Why do you come here on Sunday mornings? What motivates you to get up out of bed every Sunday, get yourself & your family ready & attend worship?

Why is it important to you that you are here? What is it that you are seeking?

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Followers of Jesus have been gathering together faithfully for “Church” for **2000 years**. And going back even further, God’s people gathered together in synagogues, & before that in the tabernacle, & at the Temple for worship

God’s people, gathered together in corporate worship, has been a trademark of what it means to be the people of God since the 10<sup>th</sup> Cent. BC.

Why is it so important that we not forsake the faithful gathering together of the saints? **The clarity of our answer will determine the level of our commitment!**

Turn to John 6, & let’s look at the life & ministry of Jesus, & what it reveals about the many reasons behind why people gather together as the Church!

But let me first paint a picture of what worship looked like in that day.

**What God’s people did on the Sabbath at the synagogue mirrors in many ways what we do here on Sunday mornings!**

What was somewhat different was that the gathering of the people didn’t end at the conclusion of the service, it often spilled over into the marketplace, the hillsides, on boats, in houses, wherever the people were together

**“Synagogue”, like the word “Church”** today, meant both the place of gathering & also the people themselves who were gathered together.

Jesus was often at the center of these synagogue gatherings – both those on the Sabbath in the synagogue, and those outside of it throughout the week!

But what were the people truly seeking as they gathered in crowds around Jesus in His day, and how is that similar to the reasons we should have for gathering together in the name of Jesus, as Christians, today? **Read John 6:1-14**

As John 6 begins, Jesus had just finished giving an extensive teaching about His true identity, the sermon was over, but the gathering/the crowd continued to follow Him longing for more.

### Some key insights from John 6:1-14:

- **Going to church is important, but it doesn’t stop there!** The people of God are known as those who are continually seeking the things of God! They want to learn, grow, understand, & experience God in all of life!

**Vs. 2 “And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick”.**

- The signs of God’s activity in this world are all around us. We gather together as “the church” to seek, celebrate & participate in that activity.
- **And when we come seeking God’s activity, God shows up!** Can you imagine that potluck lunch? God did an amazing thing in their midst as they showed up to have an encounter with God’s Son, Jesus!

Are we here seeking a true encounter with Jesus? Are we seeking to truly know & experience the activity of God in our lives and in our world?

### Some key insights from John 6:22-34:

- The desire to gather together as God’s people in the presence of Jesus, comes as a **result** of the encounters we have already had with Him!

**Vs. 26 “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.”**

- Seeking signs from God is no longer necessary when you have already experienced the presence, power and working of God in your life!
- **Jesus is the bread of life that eternally satisfies!** Once you’ve tasted that, there’s nothing else more desirable than more of Him in your life!

### Some key insights from John 6:59-69:

- Many of the realities of God are difficult to grasp, believe, & accept. T/f we need to continually have the words of **“Spirit & life”** spoken to us!

I can’t multiply loaves & fish and fill you up physically, but **every Sunday I can speak God’s Word & offer you the Bread of Life that fulfills eternally!**

- Some will turn away, but true followers of Jesus will respond as Peter did, **“To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”–vs. 68**

**“The Gathering” of God’s people is a transformational environment!** Jesus didn’t forsake it, so what should that reveal to us about our need for it?

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