

## Does God Really Care About Numbers – Luke 15:1-7

Does God care about numbers? Now that's a good question!

If the answer is "No" then why do we spend so much time dwelling on them?  
If the answer is "Yes", then what numbers does He care about, & shouldn't we?

Some questions I often get asked as a pastor are:

"How many people worship at your church on a Sunday?"	176
"How many members do you have in your congregation?"	309
"How many teens are involved in your youth ministry program?"	23
"How much is the weekly offering at your church?"	\$8,128.65

How important are these numbers? **It depends upon your perspective!**

- Years ago our worship attendance was much higher. But in 2019 we have averaged 11 more people in worship than in 2018.
- Of the 309 members, 204 are active members. **But we did receive 16 new confessing members & 4 new baptized members in 2019 (plus one more baptized already in 2020). Plus we re-activated 3 inactive in 2019.**
- There are 23 teens involved in our youth ministry! **Experts say if your numbers equal 10% or more of your congregation, you're doing well!**
- Our giving for the year was \$10,439.07 under budget. But we missed a Sunday & our weekly giving increased by \$470.56 from the previous year!

Last year, as a Consistory, we set numeric goals of reaching 200 in worship, our giving to exceed budget, and 20 new members received into the church.

Based on the numbers, how did we do as a church?

- **We didn't reach the 200 mark, but the number is growing.**
- We had 50 new adults & 13 new kids visit our church last year.
- Giving didn't exceed budget, but there were 23 weeks when it did.
- We didn't receive 20 new members last year, but **over the past 2 years we have received 40 new members into our congregation!** Perspective!

This year, we have again set some numeric goals – 200 in worship, giving to exceed budget, 100 in small groups (96), & 150 serving in a ministry (136).

**We believe these are all attainable goals!** It will require faith on our part, but with God's help and His blessing these goals can be realized!

But are these the numbers that really matter to God? Read **Luke 15:1-7**

**According to this passage, there's at least one number that really matters from God's perspective, & that is the number of lost sinners saved!**

Did you catch the last verse, **"There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance?"**

The shepherd will leave the 99 in the open country, & go after the one that is lost, until he finds it. **His focus is not upon the found, but upon the lost!**

Is that the mentality of the church today? Is that the focus of what we do & why we do it? **That's what this TRY PRAYING initiative has been all about!**

It's all about getting the church to go and seek out lost sheep, until they are found! It's about joining the Good Shepherd in His pursuit of drawing sinners into the fold of God! Is that what we are about as a church?

How much do we care about the number of conversions that take place each year as God works through the ministries & missional efforts of our church? **This is a number that God cares immensely about!**

Numbers matter, but some numbers matter more than others!

We too often consume ourselves with:

- How many people show up for worship/our small group/events.
- How many hymns we sing or new songs we've incorporated.
- How many minutes the service went over today compared to normal.
- How many people actually approached me today and said "hi".

**Let us not get caught up in the numbers that don't have eternal significance!**

Let's get caught up in the one thing that God seems to really care about, and what the Shepherd is truly focused upon – **lost sheep being found!**

Our problem is often the same as the Pharisees & scribes of Jesus' day, Luke 15 – **"they grumbled, saying, 'This man receives sinners & eats with them.'**

We get so focused on doing church and having what we do meet our own needs, that we miss what the Church is really supposed to be all about!

**Jesus was far less concerned about how to "do" church. His greater concern was about how to "be" the Church & seek out the lost!**

This message from Jesus in Luke 15 must not have been received well, b/c the rest of chapter is Jesus trying 2 other ways to get the same message across!

Let us not forget about the lost sheep, the lost coin, & the prodigal son. **They represent more than just a number, they represent a soul saved!**

Let us not be like the Pharisees, the scribes, or the older brother, whose focus was only on themselves. Let us have the focus of Jesus – **Luke 19:10.**

## Does God Really Care About Numbers – Luke 15:1-7

Does God care about numbers? Now that's a good question!

If the answer is "No" then why do we spend so much time dwelling on them?  
If the answer is "Yes", then what numbers does He care about, & shouldn't we?

Some questions I often get asked as a pastor are:

- "How many people worship at your church on a Sunday?" \_\_\_\_\_
- "How many members do you have in your congregation?" \_\_\_\_\_
- "How many teens are involved in your youth ministry program?" \_\_\_\_\_
- "How much is the weekly offering at your church?" \_\_\_\_\_

How important are these numbers? It depends upon your \_\_\_\_\_!

- Years ago our worship attendance was much higher. But in 2019 we have averaged 11 more people in worship than in 2018.
- Of the 309 members, 204 are active members. But we did receive \_\_\_ new confessing members & \_ new baptized members in 2019 (plus one more baptized already in 2020). Plus we re-activated 3 inactive in 2019.
- There are 23 teens involved in our youth ministry! Experts say if your numbers equal \_\_\_\_\_ or more of your congregation, you're doing well!
- Our giving for the year was \$10,439.07 under budget. But we missed a Sunday & our weekly giving increased by \$470.56 from the previous year!

Last year, as a Consistory, we set numeric goals of reaching 200 in worship, our giving to exceed budget, and 20 new members received into the church.

Based on the numbers, how did we do as a church?

- We didn't reach the 200 mark, but the number is \_\_\_\_\_.
- We had 50 new adults & 13 new kids visit our church last year.
- Giving didn't exceed budget, but there were 23 weeks when it did.
- We didn't receive 20 new members last year, but over the past 2 years we have received \_\_\_ new members into our congregation! Perspective!

This year, we have again set some numeric goals – 200 in worship, giving to exceed budget, 100 in small groups (96), & 150 serving in a ministry (136).

We believe these are all \_\_\_\_\_ goals! It will require faith on our part, but with God's help and His blessing these goals can be realized!

But are these the numbers that really matter to God? Read **Luke 15:1-7**

According to this passage, there's at least one number that really matters from God's perspective, & that is the number of lost sinners \_\_\_\_\_!

Did you catch the last verse, ***"There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance?"***

The shepherd will leave the 99 in the open country, & go after the one that is lost, until he finds it. His focus is not upon the found, but upon the \_\_\_\_\_!

Is that the mentality of the church today? Is that the focus of what we do & why we do it? That's what this \_\_\_\_\_ initiative has been all about!

It's all about getting the church to go and seek out lost sheep, until they are found! It's about joining the Good Shepherd in His pursuit of drawing sinners into the fold of God! Is that what we are about as a church?

How much do we care about the number of conversions that take place each year as God works through the ministries & missional efforts of our church? This is a number that God cares \_\_\_\_\_ about!

Numbers matter, but some numbers matter more than others!

We too often consume ourselves with:

- How many people show up for worship/our small group/events.
- How many hymns we sing or new songs we've incorporated.
- How many minutes the service went over today compared to normal.
- How many people actually approached me today and said "hi".

Let us not get caught up in the numbers that don't have \_\_\_\_\_ significance! Let's get caught up in the one thing that God seems to really care about, and what the Shepherd is truly focused upon – lost sheep being \_\_\_\_\_!

Our problem is often the same as the Pharisees & scribes of Jesus' day, Luke 15 – ***"they grumbled, saying, 'This man receives sinners & eats with them.'***

We get so focused on doing church and having what we do meet our own needs, that we miss what the Church is really supposed to be all about!

Jesus was far less concerned about how to \_\_\_\_\_ church. His greater concern was about how to \_\_\_\_\_ the Church & seek out the lost!

This message from Jesus in Luke 15 must not have been received well, b/c the rest of chapter is Jesus trying 2 other ways to get the same message across!

Let us not forget about the lost sheep, the lost coin, & the prodigal son. They represent more than just a number, they represent a \_\_\_\_\_!

Let us not be like the Pharisees, the scribes, or the older brother, whose focus was only on themselves. Let us have the focus of Jesus – **Luke 19:10.**