

## Churchgoers Live Longer By David Briggs

Live longer. Go to church more often. A major study of church attendance and mortality reveals people who attend church more than once a week are likely to live an average of seven years longer than people who never attend worship services.

That seven-year gap is the same as the difference in life expectancies between men and women and between blacks and whites. Among black people studied, the gulf was even wider, with the life expectancy at age 20 for those attending church regularly being 60.1 years, compared to 46.4 years for those who never attend church.

"Something's going on here," said Robert A. Hummer of the Population Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

The findings by sociologists Hummer and Christopher G. Ellison of the University of Texas, Richard G. Rogers of the University of Colorado at Boulder and Charles B. Nam of Florida State University were presented recently at the joint meeting of the Religious Research Association and the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.

Several previous studies have uncovered a positive link between religion and physical and mental health. However, there has been little research on the national level into the relation between religious experience and mortality.

In the new study, partly funded by the National Science Foundation, researchers began with a nationally representative sample of 22,080 people interviewed in their homes in 1987 as part of a cancer risk factor survey conducted by the federal Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The study data are based on 2,016 people from the federal survey who were identified as dying from 1987 to 1995 by matching respondents with the National Death Index.

Researchers found the life expectancy at age 20 for people who never attend church was 55.3 years, compared to 61.9 years for people who attend services once a week and 62.9 for people who attend more than once a week.

"Our life expectancy estimates... indicate that religious attendance differences in mortality are similar in magnitude to those of sex and race," researchers said.

Researchers say some of the gap may be explained by the health benefits of churches discouraging unhealthy behaviors such as smoking (and promiscuity, alcoholism, drug abuse, violence, etc. -- prb).

And the social ties promoted by church attendance contribute to a network of people that help monitor the health of members.

One area they suggest for further study is to see whether worship attendance decreases stress and helps church members cope with illness.

Kenneth Pargament, a sociologist at Bowling Green State University, who studies the relation between religion and health, praised the new study. "This kind of data underscores the power of religion, not only for their psychological well being, but their physical well being," he said.

In Northeast Ohio, the study results resonated with the experience of church workers seeking to strengthen the connection between the religious and medical communities.

"It is a biblical principle that the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit," said... Mark Olds, director of the Olivet Health and Education Institute. "That leads to promoting healthy care of the body." (Edited, Plain Dealer, 12/5/98, 1-4f)

### Take Away The Storms

"One night while my young son, Ryan, was sleeping, a storm began brewing outside. After a loud clap of thunder, I heard him wake up so I headed toward his room to comfort him. He asked me to stay with him until he fell asleep. As I lay there I realized he hadn't asked me to make the storm go away, but to stay with him.

How many times, I wondered, have I asked God to take away the storms of life, when instead I need to ask him to stay with me and help me weather them more peacefully? (Kim Sherer)

### Safety Tip

Do not ride in an auto; they cause 20% of all fatal accidents.

Do not stay at home; 17% of all accidents happen there.

Do not walk in the street; 15% of all accidents happen to pedestrians.

Do not travel by air, rail or water; 16% of all accidents result from these activities.

Only .001% of all accidents happen in the church (building)!

Therefore the safest place to be on: Sunday AM at 9:30, Sunday PM at 6:00, and Wednesday PM at 7:00 is right here at Tomlinson Run! (Adapted from The Joyful Noiseletter, Sept - Oct 1988, via Creators Syndicate)

### Should You Go First

(Selected)

Should you go first and I remain, to walk the road alone.

I'll live in memory's garden dear, with happy day's we've known.

In Spring I'll watch for roses red, when fades the lilac blue.

In early Fall when brown leaves call, I'll catch a glimpse of you.

Should you go first and I remain, for battles to be fought.

Each thing you've touched along the way, will be a hallowed spot.

I'll hear your voice, I'll see your smile, though blindly I may grope.

The memory of your helping hand will buoy me on with hope.

Should you go first and I remain, to finish with the scroll.

No lengthening shadows shall creep in, to make this life seem droll.

We've know so much of happiness, we've had our cup of joy.

And memory is one gift of God, that death cannot destroy.

Should you go first and I remain, one thing I'd have you do;

Walk slowly down the long, lone path, for soon I'll follow you.

I'll want to know each step you take, that I may walk the same.

For someday, down that lonely road, you'll hear me call your name.

### A Moments Wisdom

What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others in the world remains and is immortal.

Don't place too much confidence in a man who boasts of being as honest as the day is long. Wait until you meet him at night.

Honesty is the first chapter of the book of wisdom.

People who are brutally honest often get more satisfaction out of the brutality than out of the honesty.

Don't call a man honest just because he never had the chance to steal.

If you do not tell the truth about yourself, you cannot tell it about other people.

Put a rogue in the limelight, and he will act like an honest man.

Live right so the preacher won't have to lie at your funeral.

A hypocrite never intends to be what he pretends to be.

Opportunity knocks but once, but temptation leans on the doorbell.

Procrastination is the fertilizer that makes difficulties grow.

When one door of happiness closes, another opens, but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has been opened for us.

If we could learn from our mistakes, we would have a much broader education.

To serve God faithfully, you must bend your will as well as your knees.

Criticism often comes easier than craftsmanship.