

167 -- What if the most important thing in the Christian life is not the Sunday morning assembly? By Bob Young

Each week, church services take place. The assembly of the church can easily become a primary focus (or the only focus) in a busy world! When church leaders develop strategies and make plans, the conversation usually includes worship services or assemblies. Therefore, we must be intentional with our time and talk about the sleeping giant – what does it mean to be a Christian the other 167 hours of the week? Can one faithfully live the Christian life without daily worship and contact with God, without shared time with other Christians, without including Jesus in daily conversations and daily life?

I think of the 167 hours as a sleeping giant that is waiting to be recognized and awakened. I think of the 167 hours as God's power and God's way to turn individual lives, a church, and a city upside down for Jesus! Developing in every Christian a commitment to use the 167 hours for God's glory and work is not a labor-intensive ministry or leadership task – in reality, it requires little encouragement and vision-casting. Multiply the number of members in your church by 167! Then multiply by 52!! Can you see the possibilities for deploying a force of world-changers to shape and mold culture, society, and the world for Jesus Christ? (For example, 200 members x 167 x 52 = 1,736,800 hours per year.)

Too many churches have too many Christians who assemble consistently but see themselves as mediocre instead of seeing themselves as faithful, spirit-filled representatives and ambassadors of Jesus – sent forth to do something meaningful with 167 hours. Too many small groups fail to see the possibility for changed lives, restored hope, repaired brokenness. Many Christians are trapped in a mentality that says “church is Sunday” and the rest of life is not church. Too many Christians think church is the building so small groups cannot be church. Too many small groups fail to recognize that in their meetings, church is occurring – in neighborhoods, schools, restaurants, coffee shops.

What if your local church could awaken the sleeping giant? Would thousands of hours (membership x 167 x 52) expand the influence and impact of your church? What if I shared some easy ways to do that effectively?

Here are some ideas for helping members become intentional in their 167 hours.

- Give specific tasks in the sermon or at the conclusion of class, regarding spiritual conversations, number of evangelistic contacts, something to say or do..., invitations, etc.
- Assign specific discipleship tasks, e.g. daily prayer, Bible study/reading, service, contacts
- Develop intentional “167 programs” focused on the mission of the church
- Encourage (yea, demand!) small group involvement
- Develop more opportunities for spontaneous fellowship
- Celebrate what God is doing with the 167 hours, give examples (interviews, videos); use sermon illustrations related to 167.

When Christians get the message and understand God's authority over the other 167 hours, the work of the local church will be revolutionized. Hab. 2:2 says, “Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others.” Church leaders, helping your members be intentional in their 167 is a sleeping giant that will build the kingdom of God as never before.