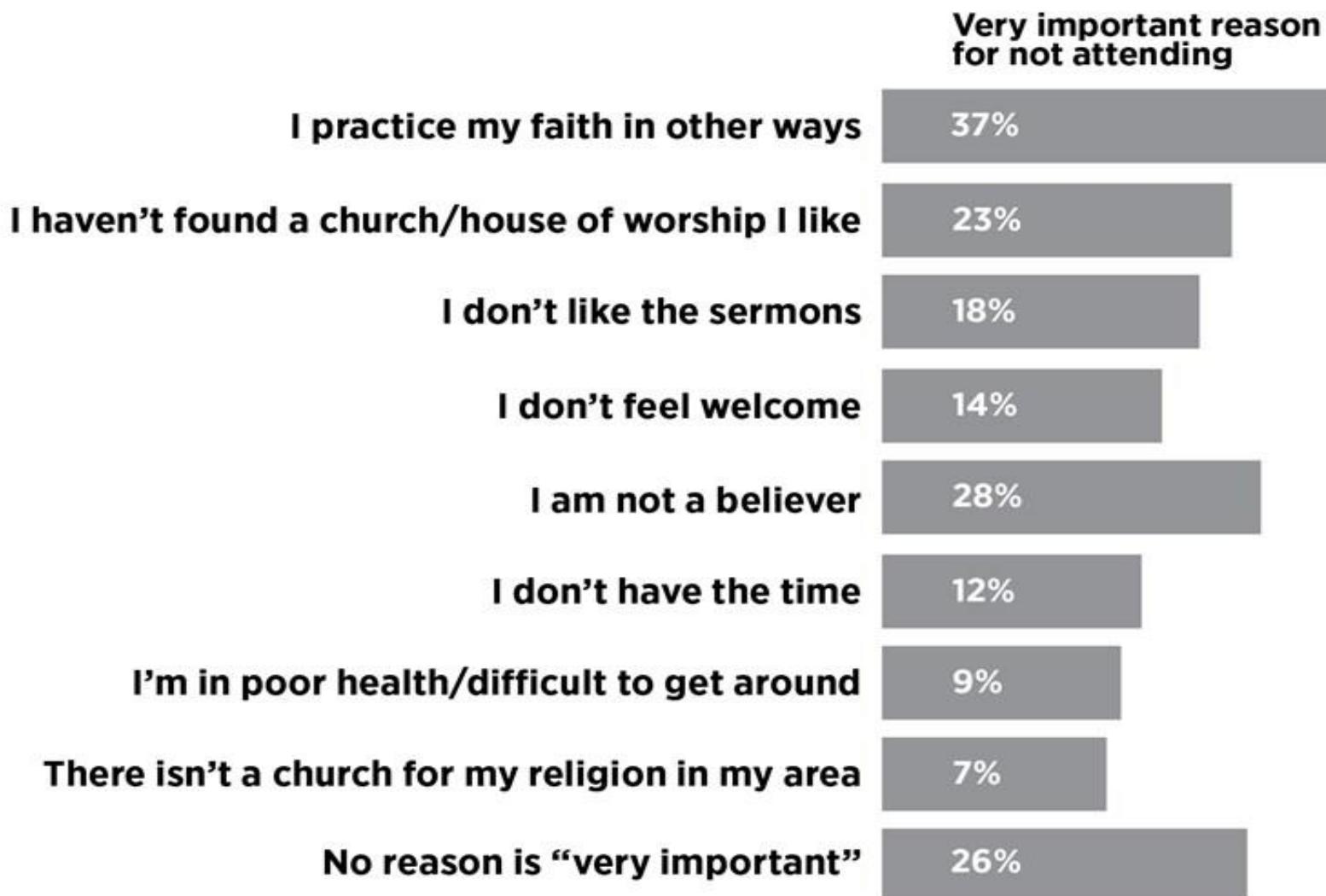




# THE LOCAL CHURCH

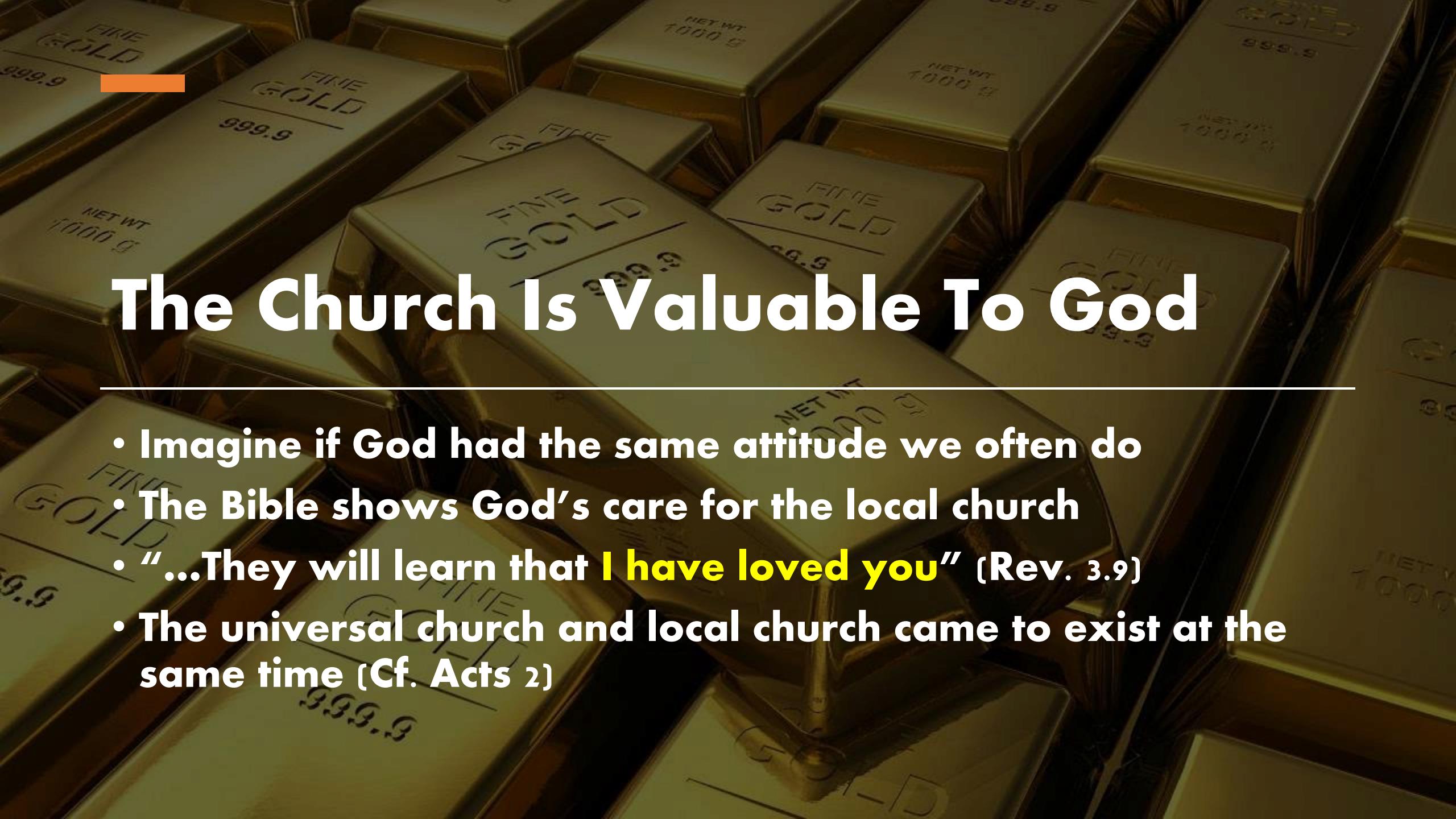
## **WHY AMERICANS DON'T GO TO CHURCH**

(or other religious services)



\* Based on US adults who attend religious services a few times a year or never.

Source: Pew Research Center

A close-up photograph of several gold bars stacked together. The bars are rectangular and have "FINE GOLD" and "999.9" embossed on them. An orange bar at the top left has the number "100".

# The Church Is Valuable To God

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- Imagine if God had the same attitude we often do
- The Bible shows God's care for the local church
- "...They will learn that I have loved you" (Rev. 3.9)
- The universal church and local church came to exist at the same time (Cf. Acts 2)

# The church is My Family



The Scriptures  
are Adamant

- “**For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.**” (**Matt. 12.50**)
- “**It is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.**” (**Gal. 3.7**)
- “**Those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.**” (**John 1.12**)

# It's Meant to Function Like One

- **Tending to needs:** Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Phil. 2.4)
- **Emotional support:** Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. (Rom. 12.15)
- **Bearing burdens together:** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (Gal. 6.2)
- **Having honest conversations:** If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. (Matt. 18.15)
- **Serving each other:** For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (Gal. 5.13)

# It's Meant to Function Like One

- Submitting to each other: Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Eph. 5.21)
- Watching out for each other: Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. (Acts 20.28)
- Giving each other more chances than we deserve: Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Eph. 4.32)

# the body of Christ



**"Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."**  
**(1 Cor. 12.27)**

**More Than  
a Family**

# Ephesians 4.11-16

- 11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,<sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

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## 1 Timothy 3.15

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- ...if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, **a pillar and buttress of the truth.**



# The Church's Greatest Value To Us?

- A means of fulfilling the greatest commandment
- “On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matt. 22.40)
- John says, “Whoever loves God **must also love his brother...**”  
(1 John 4.21)



# It's Meant to Function Like One

- Tending to needs
- Emotional support
- Bearing burdens together
- Having honest conversations
- Serving each other
- Submitting to each other
- Watching over each other
- Giving people more chances than they deserve

for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this **more** and **more**... (1 Thess. 4.10)