

Question: My child has started asking why he has to go to church if daddy doesn't. Do you have any answers that I can give him, without saying that his dad is wrong?

Answer: The question you've posed is difficult. What makes it so challenging to answer is that your husband is wrong. It is absolutely critical that a believer attend church. The New Testament knows nothing of an unchurched Christian. Moreover, there are many "one another" commands in the New Testament that require every believer to assimilate into a local body of believers (e.g., Rom 12:10; Gal 6:2; Eph 4:25; Col 3:16; Heb 3:13; 1 Pet 4:8–10). Not to mention, Hebrews 10:23–25 says, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

I realize you are well versed in the above arguments so let me just encourage you with these ideas:

(1) Pray Ephesians 1:17–18a for your son. "May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give _____ a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. May the eyes of his heart be enlightened." God loves to answer prayers prayed according to His Word. No words that you can share with your son will help him to understand his dad's inactive status. But if God gives him a sensitivity to His Spirit and spiritual eyes to see, he will understand.

(2) Pray Luke 2:52 for your son: "May _____ keep increasing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men."

(3) Pray Psalm 78:5–8 for your son: "May _____ put his confidence in God, not forget the works of God, keep His commandments, and not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not prepare its heart and whose spirit was not faithful to God."

(4) Carry out Deuteronomy 6:6–7: "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."

(5) Continue to model the following passages:

- Ephesians 5:22–24: "Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything."
- 1 Peter 3:1–6: "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear."

(6) Acknowledge that Daddy may believe in Jesus but that he has allowed other priorities to crowd out his church commitment. Explain that sometimes men lose sight of what is really important in an attempt to

provide for their families. By responding in this way, you are affirming your husband and not pitting yourself against him.

(7) I would also recommend the book *Why Men Hate Going to Church* by David Murrow. While it is written more for church leaders, I think you may find great value in it. I would also recommend *Surviving a Spiritual Mismatch in Marriage* by Lee and Leslie Strobel.