Backseat Christians and Christian Benchwarmers

I. Introduction.

A. Backseat Drivers.
   1. "I would have gone that way."
   2. "You're driving too fast" or "You're driving too slow."
   3. "Don't you ever use your horn?"
   4. "Watch out! There's a squirrel up there in the road."
   5. "Don't forget to turn left."

B. Benchwarmers.
   1. Experience with warming the bench in sports.
   2. Some players are content to ride the bench, never really contributing in the game.
   3. They're just sort of there.

C. Christian Benchwarmers and Backseat Christians.
   1. Many congregations have members who fit these two categories.
   2. People who do a lot of talking, but sit back and let others do all the work.
   3. People who are just sort of there, never getting off the bench to help the team out.

D. Ephesians 4:16.
   1. Read Ephesians 4:11-16.
   2. This passage describes the way God's church functions.
   3. Every part does its share.
   4. In God's church, there is no room for backseat Christians or Christian benchwarmers.
      a. God expects each and every member to do his or her part.

E. This morning's lesson.
   1. I'm going to pose several questions to you.
   2. Designed to help you determine if you are a backseat Christian or a Christian benchwarmer.
   3. Try to honestly answer these questions to see if you need to do more in God's kingdom.

II. Are you the last one to arrive and the first one to leave?

A. The assemblies of the church are designed for a couple of purposes.
   1. To worship God, to study His word.
   2. But also to encourage and exhort each other.
   3. Turn and read Hebrews 10:24-25.
      a. "consider one another."
      b. "exhorting one another."
   4. How do we do this?
      a. Through mutual acts of worship (praying, singing, studying, communion).
      b. But also through interaction with each other.
         * before services.
         * in between Bible study and worship.
         * after services.

B. The Habit of Some.
1. Everywhere I have ever been, it has been the habit of some to spend as little time at the church building as possible.
   a. They arrive at the last possible second.
   b. Some even sit on the pew in the very back.
   c. They leave as soon as the final "amen" is said.
2. What kind of message are you sending to your brethren if you do this?
   a. You're telling them, "I don't want to spend any more time around you than absolutely necessary."
3. What we need to be doing is utilizing the time that we get to spend with each other.
   a. Talking to each other.
   b. Showing that we care about our brethren.
   c. Encouraging each other.

C. Backseat Christian.
   1. If you fit this description, you might be a "Backseat Christian."

III. Do you complain about what the church is doing or not doing, yet you do nothing about it?

A. An observation.
   1. The people who complain the most are usually doing the least.
   2. I've seen this happen in business, in school, in families, and even in the church.
   3. It's easy to sit back and complain about something, but it's a whole lot harder to get up and try to do something about it.

B. If you believe that this congregation...
   1. Is not teaching people in the community like we should, then what are you doing to help?
   2. Is not spending enough time together outside of the worship services, then what are you doing to change that?
   3. Is not visiting the sick and elderly enough, then what are you doing to help us get better?
   4. I don't think you have a right to be upset about what the church is doing or not doing unless you are trying to do something about it.

C. No place for complainting in the church.
   1. Philippians 2:14, "Do all things without complaining or disputing."
   2. Complaining doesn't really serve any purpose.
   3. Complaining is different from constructive criticism.
      a. Complaining is simply voicing your displeasure to whoever will listen.
      b. Constructive criticism is recognizing something that we're doing wrong and trying to help to correct it.

D. Backseat Christian.
   1. If you fit this description, you might be a "Backseat Christian."

IV. Do you refuse to volunteer to do work for the church and sit back and let others do it?

A. There is a lot of work to be done in the church.
   1. Work in the public assemblies.
   2. Work teaching the Bible classes.
3. Work days in the upkeep of the building.
4. Work in teaching others the gospel.
5. Work in edifying and exhorting each other.

B. Turn and read Ephesians 4:11-12.
   1. When some people think of workers in the church, they think of elders, preachers, teachers.
   2. But notice these verses.
      a. The job of elders, preachers, and teachers are to equip the saints for the work of ministry.
      3. The saints are the workforce of the church.

C. What is your job in the church?
   1. Many times, the majority of the work is done by a minority of the members.
   2. Many will sit back and let others do the work.
   3. They come up with excuses as to why they can't do the work.

D. Backseat Christians.
   1. If you fit this description, you might be a backseat Christian.

V. If everybody in the church was just like you, would anything ever get done?

A. First of all, it is good that everybody is not the same.
   1. Paul made this point to the Corinthians.
   2. Turn and read 1 Corinthians 12:17-20.
      3. Everyone has different talents, and everyone uses their talents, the church is successful.

B. But if everyone in the church worked as hard as you do, what would happen?
   1. a. This congregation would be more successful than it ever has before.
   2. b. This congregation would be get a lot of work done.
   3. c. This congregation would stay about the way it is now.
   4. d. This congregation would not get very much done.
   5. e. This congregation would have to close its doors because there would be no one to teach, preach, participate in the services, exhort, keep up the building, or anything else for that matter.

VI. What do you see as being your part in the church?

A. The church is not a separate entity from you.
   1. You are the church.
   2. You are a part of the church.
   3. You have a vested interest in this congregation.

B. Every part does its share.
   1. Ephesians 4:16.
   2. 1 Corinthians 12, illustration of the body.
      a. Eye.
      b. Hand.
      c. Foot.
   3. Paul makes the point that the church needs all the parts.
C. Each of us needs to answer this question.
   1. What am I doing now?
   2. What part am I playing in this congregation?
   3. Is my part just taking a spot on the pew on Sunday morning?
      a. In other words, warming the bench.

VII. What could your part be in the church?

A. For men.
   1. Could you try leading singing?
   2. Can you volunteer to read the Bible or lead a prayer?
   3. Can you teach a class or offer an invitation?
   4. Can you participate in the business meeting?

B. For women.
   1. Can you teach a Bible class?
   2. Can you assist the teachers with their classes?
   3. Can you prepare the Lord's Supper?

C. There's work for us all to do.
   1. Not just these things.
   2. Much more.

D. Needed Roles in the church.
   1. Encourager: a person who can uplift the weak and push the strong to new heights.
   2. Teacher: a person who imparts knowledge by putting things in a way that others will understand.
   3. Helper: a person who might not be a leader but is willing to aid in any way.
   4. Organizer: a take-charge person who can plan and coordinate various needed activities
   5. Socializer: a person who is adept at communication and makes people feel needed and welcome.
   6. Questioner: a person who challenges tradition and always ensures that we stick closely to what the
      Bible actually says.
   7. Mender: a person who can act as a mediator and help others solve disagreements.
   8. Giver: a person who has the resources (not necessarily money) and willingness to give for the
      needs of others.
   9. Binder: a person who is a consistent and strong example of a Christian and is part of the backbone
      of the congregation, the blue that holds it all together.
   10. Visitor: a person who makes it a habit to visit other members of the church, to encourage the
      weak, the sick, and the strong.
   11. Consoler: a person who can empathize and sympathize with people who are going through tough
      times.
   12. Server: a person who humbles himself and seeks to serve his fellow man and brethren in whatever
      way possible.

E. Unneeded Roles in the Church.
   1. Taker: a person who seeks to benefit from the group but does little to give anything back.
   2. Complainer: a person who is quick to complain when things are not done the way he wants and
      does not support the decision that is made.
   3. Arguer: a person who likes to instigate disputes over matters that are usually trivial.
   4. Discourager: a person who, by disposition, words, or action, brings down the spirit of others.
   5. Loner: a person who seeks to do everything on his own; one who does not appreciate spending
      time with brethren.
6. **Compounder:** a person who has a knack for making matters worse by saying the wrong thing or doing the wrong thing.
7. **Agreer:** a person who goes along with everything, regardless of the consequences or the scripturalness of the decision.
8. **Disagreer:** a person who does not go along with anything that is not his idea, regardless of the consequences or the scripturalness of the decision.
9. **Offender:** a person who consistently says or does things that offend his brethren and gives little heed to how words or actions will affect others.

F. **Conclusion.**
   1. Which are you?
   2. What could you be?

**VIII. Conclusion:** No room in the church for Backseat Christians or Christian benchwarmers.