

During the recent election campaign candidates were asked by some electors as to whether they went to church or not. Although Christians go to church, church going is not the best test of being a Christian, after all Christianity is a relationship to God through the Lord Jesus Christ. People who consistently say yes to God and yes to Christ are Christians. Sometimes we may persuade ourselves that we are Christians when we are not really.

THE FORGIVING SPIRIT

Church going is not a test, for you cannot have a relationship with God unless you seek him and are happy in the company of His people. But a better test is whether we are willing to forgive everyone who has done us a wrong, whether real or imagined. We cannot be a Christian unless God forgives us our wrongs towards him, and Jesus teaches us that God does not forgive people who are not willing to forgive their neighbours. He told the story of a great officer of state in eastern court who owed the king an immense sum of money which he didn't pay and he begged for time, and the king in pity forgave him the debt and the man went out into the street and there he found another civil servant who happened to owe quite a small sum of money, but he immediately demanded instant payment and took no notice of the man's request for time to pay. The king was angry when he heard about this, that he revoked his own release of the officer's debt and, Jesus added, God will not forgive you unless you are willing to forgive your fellow man.

D. B. KNOX

So whether we are Christians or not, we cannot be a Christian unless we are forgiven by God, and we cannot be forgiven if we are harbouring a grudge in our hearts against others. Is there anyone in our home whom we are fully and completely forgiving towards, are there any people at work who we have a hostile

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Church going is not a bad test, for you cannot be in relationship with God unless you seek him and are happy in the company of His people. But a much better test is whether we are willing to forgive everyone who has done us a wrong, whether real or imagined. We cannot be a Christian unless God forgives us our wrongs towards Him, and Jesus taught clearly that God does not forgive people who themselves are not willing to forgive their neighbours. He told the story of a great officer of state in an eastern court who owed the king an immense sum of money which he couldn't pay and he begged for time, and the king in pity forgave him the debt and the man went out into the street and there he found another civil servant who happened to owe him quite a small sum of money, but he immediately demanded instant payment and took no notice of the man's request for time to pay. The king was so angry when he heard about this, that he revoked his own release of the officer's debt and, Jesus added, God will not forgive you unless you are willing to forgive your fellow man.

So here is a test of whether we are Christians, because we cannot be a Christian unless we are forgiven by God, and we cannot be forgiven if we are harbouring a grudge in our hearts against others. Is there anyone in our home whom we are not fully and completely forgiving towards, are there any people at work who we have a hostile

attitude to or what about our neighbours?
Jesus' words are clear "If you forgive not men
their trespasses neither will your heavenly
father forgive you yours" and it is a very
serious thing to go into eternity unforgiven.
A Christian spirit is a forgiving spirit, so
let us search our hearts to see whether there
is any unforgiving spirit within us and if we
find an unforgiving spirit in our hearts, or
if you are harbouring grudges towards others, or
any remembrance of wrongs in the past, let us
ask God to help us to have His spirit of for-
giveness towards others so that we might re-
ceive His forgiveness towards us.

God is forgiving and we ought to be forgiving.

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