

Luke 17:5
Increase our faith

Answer:
Serving won't do it.

What will?

Assumption:

The vast majority of church practices were begun for the purpose of edification (increasing faith)

Common church practices:

Singing
Attendance
Giving
Participation in the Lord's Supper
Praying
Teaching (being taught)
Good behavior

Attitude Checks

that are often left out:

- Philippians 4:8, Colossians 3:1 Meditate on what is true, noble, just, pure...
- Hebrews 12:14 Pursue peace with all men
- Romans 16:17, 1 Corinthians 5:11, 1 Corinthians 6:18 – 19, 10:14 Avoid bad stuff
- Philippians 2:4, Romans 15:2 Focus on the needs of others

Recombine the attitudes and actions

- Sometimes with believers
- Sometimes alone
- Sometimes with the general population

Increase faith through singing

- Romans 15:9 (Psalm 18:49) I will sing to your name
 - God's "name" is the essence of His personality.
 - The target audience is unbelievers
- 1 Corinthians 14:15 Sing with the Spirit and understanding
 - The main point is to use the Spirit and to understand
 - Sing about the work of the indwelling Spirit
 - Sing about the promises of understanding

More singing...

- Ephesians 5:18 – 21 Enthusiastic, varied, heartfelt, thankful...
 - Singing like Jesus would (in His name)
 - Submitting to one another
- Colossians 3:16 Teaching and admonishing with grace
 - From the concept of a Savior
 - With wisdom
- Hebrews 2:12 Jesus sang to us about the essential nature of God
- James 5:13 The natural result of cheerfulness

Attendance increases faith

- Hebrews 10:24 – 25
 - Consider the others
 - Stir up love and good deeds
 - Exhort
- 1 Corinthians 14
 - v3 Edify, exhort, comfort
 - v26 Let all things be done for edification
- Romans 14:19 Edify one another
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17 – 18 Comfort one another with words about Jesus' return.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:11 Encourage and edify
- Hebrews 3:13 Encourage day by day

Sharing increases faith

2 Corinthians 8 – 9

- 8:4 Fellowship of service
- 8:5 Gave themselves to the Lord
- 8:7 A package of attributes
- 8:14 Sharing, not giving
- 9:2, 9:12 – 14 Motivates others
- 9:6, 9:10 – 11 Sharing is an exercise in faith

The Lord's Supper increases faith

- **Remembering Jesus.** (1 Corinthians 11:24 – 25) "Do this in remembrance of Me." The immediate context in Luke 22:19 – 20 is to remember His sacrifice.
- **Fellowship.** (1 Corinthians 10:16)
- **Unity.** (1 Corinthians 10:17)
- **Participation in Jesus' Sacrifice** (1 Corinthians 10:10) In 1 Corinthians 5:7, Paul calls Jesus "our Passover." In Hebrews 10:10 – 14, the sacrifice of the body of Jesus is compared to the Mosaic sacrifices.

The Lord's Supper increases faith

- **Singleness of Purpose.** (1 Corinthians 10:21)
- **Proclamation of His Return.** (1 Corinthians 11:26)
- **Self-Examination.** (1 Corinthians 11:28)
- **The body of Jesus.** (1 Corinthians 11:24) In John 6:31 – 58. Jesus compares Himself to manna that maintains the spirit rather than the body.
- **Unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth.** (1 Corinthians 5:7 – 8). One of the images of the bread is that of purity, using the Feast of Unleavened Bread as a backdrop.

The Lord's Supper increases faith

- **Remembrance of Passover: Release from Slavery, Affliction, and Haste.** (Exodus 12:27, 13:8; Deuteronomy 16:3)
- **The blood of Jesus.** (1 Corinthians 11:25) "This cup is the new covenant in My blood." (Matthew 26:28) "...which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Both forgiveness and the seal of a contract are illustrated.

The Lord's Supper increases faith

- **Consuming the Blood of Jesus.** (John 6:31 – 58) The Law specifically forbade the drinking of blood (Leviticus 17:10 *et al*), as did the apostles (Acts 15:29). Jesus' image of drinking His blood represents taking the character of Jesus into ourselves.
- **Sprinkled Blood.** (Hebrews 9:11 – 10:22) Jesus' blood is compared to the blood sprinkled in the Mosaic rituals of dedication and purification, by which our consciences are cleansed.

Praying increases faith

- The role of the Spirit (Romans 8:26 – 27, 1 John 5:14, Jude 20)
 - The Spirit brings our prayers up to God's standards
 - The Spirit modifies our prayer to conform to the will of God
 - If it is according to His will, He hears
 - Praying in the Holy Spirit

Praying increases faith

- Appropriate occasions (James 5:13 – 18, 1:5 – 8, 1 Timothy 2:1 – 2, Philippians 4:6 – 7, Ephesians 6:18)
 - Relief from affliction
 - Recovery from illness
 - Forgiveness for me and for others
 - Adjustments to nature to get the attention of unbelievers
 - Ask for wisdom
 - For world leaders that we live in peace
 - Relief from anxiety
 - With thanksgiving
 - For all the saints

Praying increases faith

- Cautions about prayer (James 4:1 – 2, 1 Corinthians 14:15, 1 John 3:22, 1 Timothy 2:8, 1 Peter 4:7)
 - Failing to ask
 - Asking with poor motives
 - Pray with understanding
 - Whatever we ask we receive because we keep His commandments (v23: the commandments are faith and love)
 - Without wrath or doubting
 - Be serious and watchful in your prayers

Praying increases faith

- Attitudes of prayer (Hebrews 4:16, Ephesians 3:12, 1 John 5:15, Philippians 4:7)
 - Boldly
 - Confidently
 - We know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him
- The peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds

Review of Faith and Practice

- Singing: Romans 15:9 (2 Samuel 22:50) I will give thanks to you among the Gentiles and sing praises to Your name.
- Attendance: 2 Corinthians 14:26 Let all things be done for edification – to build faith
- Sharing: 2 Corinthians 8:7 Abound in everything – faith, speech, knowledge, diligence, love – see that you abound in this grace [sharing] also.
- Lord's Supper: 1 Corinthians 11:30 For this reason, many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.
- Praying: 1 John 5:15 If we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions we have asked of Him

Teaching and being taught increase faith

- Acts 17:11 These were more noble...searched the Scriptures daily to see if these things were true.
- 2 Corinthians 4:13 I believed, therefore I spoke
- Colossians 3:16 Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly
- 2 Timothy 2:15 Rightly dividing the Word of truth
- 2 Timothy 2:23 – 26 The Lord’s bondservant ... must be able to teach ... in humility correcting those in opposition
- 1 Peter 2:2 Long for the pure milk of the Word

Good Behavior

- Matthew 5:48 “Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect”
- John 17:20 – 23 “That the world may believe that Thou sent Me”
- 1 John 3:3 Everyone who has this hope purifies himself just as He is pure
- 2 Corinthians 6:16 – 7:1 We are the Temple of the living God, therefore cleanse yourselves, perfecting holiness in the fear of Christ.
- 2 Corinthians 4:7 Displaying the power of God

Good Behavior

- Ephesians 2:10 We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works
- Galatians 5:16 – 25, Colossians 3:2:18 – 3:10 Works of the flesh are contrary to the fruit of the Spirit
- Romans 6:1 – 18, 8:13 We are no longer slaves of sin
- Romans 1:28, Galatians 5:1 – 14 Unrighteousness is not “fitting”
- 1 Corinthians 5:8 Malice and wickedness spoils sincerity and truth

Good Behavior

- Ephesians 4:30 Failing to put off the old man grieves the Holy Spirit of God
- Romans 2:24, Isaiah 52:5, Ezekiel 36:22 Inconsistent behavior causes the name of God to be blasphemed
- 1 Timothy 6:1 Christian slaves who do not honor their unbelieving masters cause the name of God and His doctrine to be blasphemed
- Titus 2:5 Poor behavior by older women (perhaps including all Christians) causes the word of God to be blasphemed

Why Faith?

- God promises that I can be more than I am.
- Philippians 4:8 Think about the successes of faith, not the failures of behavior.
- Faith requires choice. Behavior may be from choice or force or lack of options.
- The universe is an incubator for faith.

Not knowing a promise creates a weakness in faith that may cause collapse when stressed.

Where does forgiveness fit in?

- Forgiveness is necessary, but it is not the whole story.
 - Colossians 1:12 ...the Father ... has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance.
 - 2 Corinthians 3:5 – 6 ...God ... has made us sufficient
- If forgiveness were the point
 - We would be constantly forgiven failures
 - Heaven would be populated by failures or by people we don’t know.
- Jesus paid our debt, but we need the Spirit to succeed, to be transformed.