

***“I hate organized religion, which puts barriers between people.***

***But I’m into spirituality. I can worship God on my own.”***

# Introduction

Read the attached article, “I Left Organized Religion Behind and I Have No Regrets” by Maria Nelson. **Mark all the reasons or experiences** that contributed to why she left organized religion.

# What is “Organized Religion”?

***Ephesians 2:14-22 -****For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

Watch a YouTube video, “On Organized Religion,” from Anne Rice, an author of Christian literature, who sums up many people’s views when she says, “I am no longer Christian, and I am no longer part of Christianity. I am a believer in Christ.”  (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxQ8tpwdJ1Y>)

In common usage, what is meant by “organized religion”? by “a believer in Christ”? by “spirituality”?

In biblical usage, what is meant by “the church”?

**The Importance of Christian Community**

***Hebrews 10:24-24 -****And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

How does a person’s simple presence in church encourage someone else towards Christian living?

Agree/disagree & why: “You can worship God on your own.”

**React to this scenario**: “I have not been to worship in your church, Pastor, for years, but my relationship to God has never been better. I pray every day. I read my Bible when I have the time. I try to be a good person to those around me. I feel so close to God right now. I am a private person, and I don’t like being around or talking to other people. I don’t feel close to people in the church and don’t have any friends there. Coming back to church would only make me feel uncomfortable.”

Watch a CBS Evening News story about recent Pew Research about the rise of the “nones” – those who do not affiliate with any religion. **What are all the ramifications** if we are not crystal clear in how we respond to this objection? (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qK3ViYJaZEo>)

**Conclusion**

Practice how you would answer the above objection to Christianity.