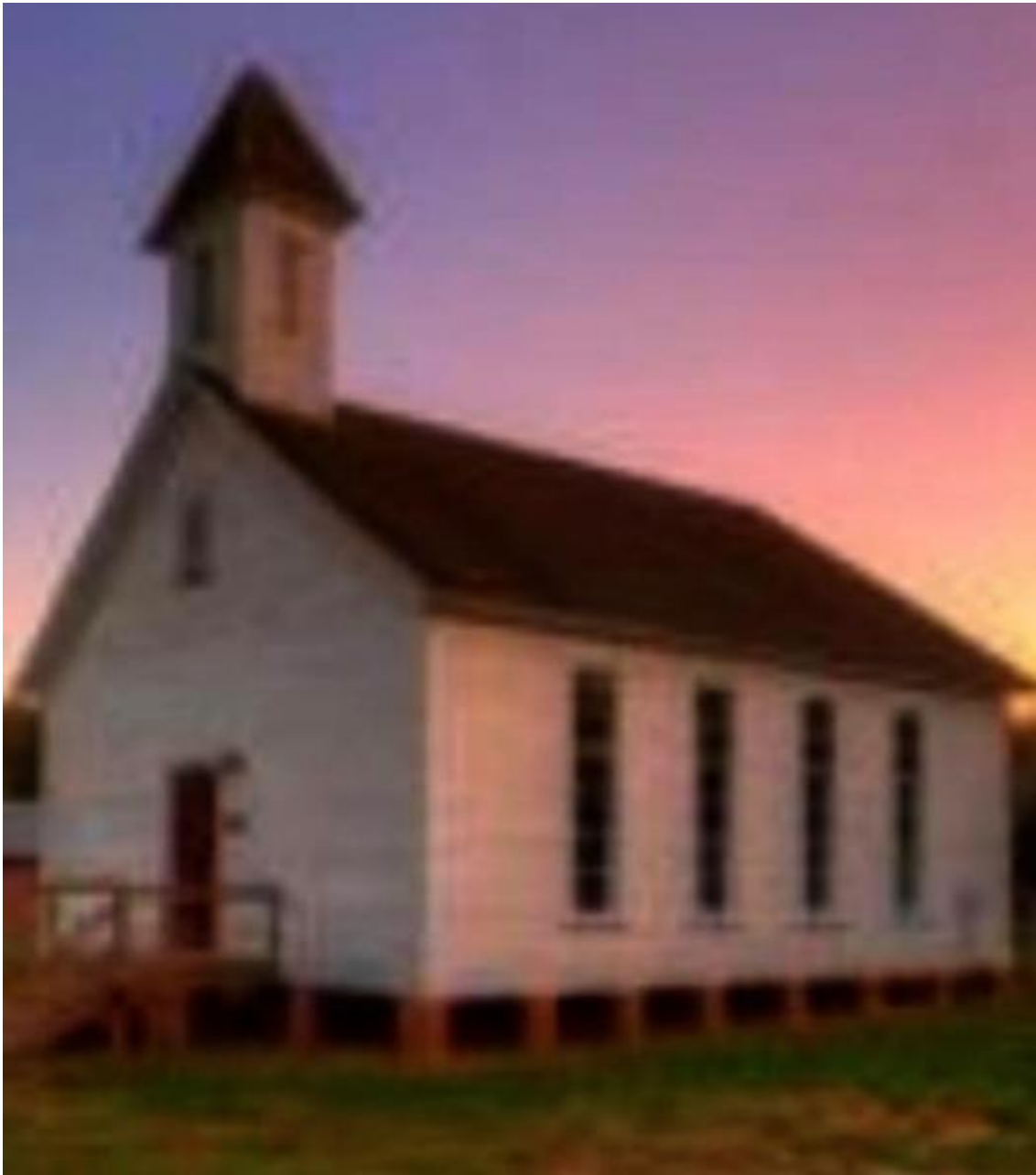




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The Empty Pew

The Empty Pew It is hard to imagine a time when churches did not have air conditioning, running water, cushioned chairs or pews. A church where there was a bucket of water in the corner with a dipper that everyone shared. The windows would be opened in the heat and people would crowd together for warmth in the winter. If you had to use the bathroom, you would have to make the long journey to the outhouse. Yet with all of these inconveniences, Sundays use to be a time when people gathered at the church house to hear God's Word. Many churches didn't have Sunday School or youth programs and everyone was in the sanctuary to worship, hear God's Word, and be together. Pews were filled and I heard a lady this past weekend say she remembered when there was no more room in the church, people gathered outside by the windows and doors to hear the preacher preach the Word. God was a priority. Family was a priority. People will say, "It was a simpler time back then." Was it? People worked hard from sun up to sun down, most families were fortunate to have one car, and most items were handmade. Yet with everything they had to do on any given day, they made time for God and church. Unfortunately today, it seems God and church is no longer a priority in too many families. The empty pew is becoming more common in churches throughout our nation. I have heard it said the church needs to change with the times, the church needs to cater to the people, the church needs more programs, the church..... Whatever happened to the thought of the church raising disciples and ministering to the community? Whatever happened to the church being a place where people came to greet one another to share the Word of God and to encourage one another in a life of holiness and righteousness? Whatever happened to people wanting to serve instead of being served? The empty pew breaks my heart. Are people just too busy for God or do they just not care anymore? Either way, as more and more churches close their doors and people begin to remember when there use to be a place where God's people would gather, one day when all the church doors are closed, maybe then, just maybe, people will once again rediscover their thirst to know who God is and to be with one another for worship and prayer. Thanks to Pastor Jamey Grooms for sharing



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