SO MANY QUESTIONS
Question 13: Do you have to go to church to be a Christian?

Think about it

1. What kind of question is this?

    a. Knowing (needing evidence)

    b. Meaning (knowing what 'the truth' about God is)

    c. Living (moral issues / how we ought to live)

2. What are some of the reasons someone might have for asking this question?

3. How would you go about answering this question? Jot down the kinds of things you think could be included in an answer.

Summarize your answer

In your own words, using three or four simple points, write down how you would answer the question "Do you have to go to church to be a Christian?"

Do not turn page over until after you complete this side! ☺

For further thought:

Do you have to go to church to be a Christian?

- If you want to understand whether you need to go to church to be a Christian, you need to understand what a Christian is first.
- A Christian is someone who has turned from living for themselves to living with Jesus as their King and Saviour. Jesus has rescued them from their sin, and brought them forgiveness. He's the one who sets the direction of a Christian's life. But being a Christian is not a solo thing or a spectator sport. Being a Christian is about being part of God's people. It's about being part of a team. That's where church comes in.
- Church is not a building or an event you 'attend'; church is a group of Christians gathering together to have the Bible taught to them as a group so that they'll know how to behave with each other as a group. They go to pray with each other and for each other, and they go to encourage each other. This is because being a Christian is not just about my relationship with God; it's also about how I relate to the rest of Jesus' people.
- If you are a Christian and you choose not to go to church, ultimately you're denying that Jesus is in charge of your life. It's like getting married and then not living with your wife or husband, or saying that you are committed to the sports team but not showing up for training or matches.

Other approaches

- Find out why the person doesn't like the idea of church and when they last went to church. It may well be that they have a specific negative past experience or a misconception. Or it could be that they don't want to commit their lives to what God thinks is best. Clarify what church is about, but also invite them along to church so that they can experience firsthand what a loving Christian community is like.

Further reading

- Kel Richards, *Defending the Gospel*, Matthias Media, Sydney, 2006, chapter 8.