

Up in Smoke

Did you have a great 4th of July? OK, how many of you spent money on fireworks? How many of you ate a hot dog? How about grilling hamburgers? I am not going to ask about what you drank!

We love to celebrate and the 4th is one of our best celebrations of the year. I thought you might like to hear some 4th of July facts. Consider that we spent...

- \$7.15 BILLION dollars on food for the 4th!
- 150 million plus hot dogs were consumed.
- We spent almost \$400 million on chicken and another nearly \$400 million on ground beef for burgers. Nearly \$40 million was spent on ketchup alone!
- Over \$1 BILLION was spent on beer!
- Over \$71 dollars is the average spent per household on food for barbecues and picnics.

What really makes the 4th spectacular is the fireworks. 16,000 fireworks displays are held each Fourth of July. The average cost of hosting a municipal fireworks display is between \$5,000 to \$30,000. \$340 million is what will be spent on display fireworks in total. That is your tax dollars at work. **Over \$1 billion will be spent on fireworks as consumers will spend around \$800 million buying fireworks!**

Think about it, all that money simply going up in smoke. In fact it is estimated that average household spending for the entire 4th will run over \$350 dollars per family.

\$350 dollars versus \$200 dollars. \$200 is the medium amount that Americans give to a church annually. We spend \$350 on food and fun all of which is here today and gone tomorrow. Don't get me wrong, I am all about having fun AND celebrating big on the 4th. Yet think about what this says of our priorities. Many spend more on fireworks that go up in smoke than they do investing into the lives of others for eternity.

So, as we approach our offering time consider that what we do with the money that is given us never goes up in smoke. Your gifts allow us to do all the missions and ministry work we do. Let's give today so that we can help people find the eternal freedoms we have in Christ!