

P*L*A*N*T*E*D in God's House

The Bible says the only way we will flourish is by being planted. If you aren't committed to a local church, you will miss many benefits promised in God's Word.

The Bible tells us that "those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing" (Ps. 92:13-14, NKJV). In this passage, the will of the Lord for His people is clearly stated. It is for them to be planted in His house—to have roots in a particular local church.

The word "planted" conveys the meaning of being stationary or permanent. When something is planted, it does not move around. It is in a fixed location.

For so long in the body of Christ we have had people who bounce around from church to church. This is not the plan of God for any believer.

Many of these same Christians travel from conference to conference but refuse to be planted. In their hearts and minds, the conferences they attend substitute for being planted in a local church. Conferences and seminars are wonderful and can benefit believers immensely, but they should never be considered a substitute for the local house of the Lord.

Other Christians thrive on spiritual food from televangelists but do not attend a local assembly. Staying home and watching someone preach is not "having church," nor does it signify that you are planted. TV ministries do not take the place of

the local church.

The Greek word for “church” is ekklesia. It means “a calling out and assembly.” You, by yourself, are a member of the body of Christ; but when the members assemble together, we have the church. Since the church is “a calling out” or “the called out ones,” then know that God is calling you out of your house in order to be planted in His house.

The Scripture promises that those who are planted will flourish. The word “flourish” is defined as “to break forth as a bud.” In other words—breakthrough! Those who are planted will have breakthrough in their lives.

“Flourish” is also defined as “to blossom and to spread.” Nothing blossoms without being planted. Planting is the prerequisite for the satisfying of God’s promise.

As a pastor, I have counseled a number of people who have had obstacles in their lives. The ones who have had the greatest and largest number of obstacles have been those who had a history of not being planted.

I believe many obstacles can be avoided when we are planted in the house of the Lord. Protection, safety, encouragement and blessing come when we join a local church that teaches and preaches the Word of God.

The passage above from Psalm 92 also says that those who are planted will be fresh and flourishing (v. 14.) These two words mean “rich, fertile and prosperous.” As a result of your being planted, there will be richness in your life that will cause fruitfulness and increase. You will be a productive individual

excelling in all you put your hand to. God's promise is abundance and prosperity for the man or woman who is planted.

But God doesn't want us to go to just any church. He has already chosen a place for us, and He will reveal to every believer the local church He wants him or her to be planted in.

Why? Because He knows exactly what each of us needs to be able to grow and develop spiritually. Often we think we know better than the Lord what we need. However, Jesus said that the "'Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him'" (Matt. 6:8).

If the Father knows what we need, then He knows what local church will meet our needs. As we are planted in that place, we will grow, mature and develop spiritually.

We must allow the Spirit of God to lead us to the church where we are to be planted. It will be to our benefit and save us from the heartache and confusion produced by being in the wrong place.

God is the one who chooses; our job is to agree with Him about His will for our lives. The choice to obey will empower God's blessing. Remember the words of the prophet Samuel, "'To obey is better than sacrifice'" (1 Sam. 15:22).

You may ask, "How do I find the right church home?" Here are seven basic principles that will help you know you are in the place God wants you to be.

1. You will have a witness in your spirit. There will be a knowing that you are with spiritual family. There will be a drawing of the Spirit of the Lord to that particular house of worship. You will have a sense of spiritual fulfillment and destiny.

You will also have peace and a perception that you are in the right place. It will be like a “green light” in your spirit.

2. You will be spiritually challenged. Ask yourself: Will my faith be stirred to believe for greater than what I am currently experiencing? Is the pastor preaching the Word of God? Do the messages that are delivered challenge me to go further in God?

True pastors will challenge their congregations to reach further and higher. They will spend the bulk of their time encouraging believers to get out of their comfort zones rather than pacifying the spiritually lazy who want to go nowhere.

3. You will fit in with the congregation. You, and your family if you have one, should be able to “fit and flow” with that particular body of believers. You should feel you are an integral part of something that is positively affecting not only your life but the lives of others also.

To flow with a local church means there will be an opportunity for your ministry to function. You need to ask yourself these questions: Is everything a “one-man show,” or are there others involved in different areas of ministry? Will I be activated to function or put on reserve status indefinitely?

Though your gifts may not be implemented immediately, you can

get some kind of inclination of these things by observing those around you.

4. You will agree with the church vision. The prophet Amos said that people cannot walk together unless they are in agreement with one another (see Amos 3:3). If you cannot agree with the vision, plan and purpose of the house of the Lord you are considering, you may need to look elsewhere.

5. You will be equipped to do God's will. Can you be equipped to do what God has called you to do and fulfill your destiny? Will you be empowered for works of service and activated into your membership ministry? Are you motivated to arise out of a place of passivity and move forward?

The ministry gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher are in the church for the purpose of equipping believers to fulfill their personal ministries (see Eph. 4:11-13). Every believer has a God-given ministry and function both within and outside the church. You must be in a place that is equipping, empowering and motivating you to operate in your gifts.

6. You will find spiritual food to eat. God does not want us to go to His house and not be fed. The place to which He calls us will be one of spiritual sustenance.

Pastors have a desire to "feed the flock." A loving pastor will serve up a spiritual meal for his congregation. He will work to ensure that those who are planted will be spiritually nourished. Like earthly parents, God will want to feed you when you come over to His "house."

7. You will have a sense of belonging. God desires for us to be a part of a covenantal spiritual family. When you find the right church home, you will begin to sense that you have come into the company of those of “like precious faith.”

To remain planted in any local church you must have a sense of belonging. Every believer should have a group of people he can relate to on a spiritual and social level. Those people make up the local church in which God has called him to be planted.

God has given us a command to be planted in the house of the Lord. As we obey, we will see the blessing of the Lord come into our lives and our families. God will cause us to develop, thrive and flourish when we follow His direction.

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