

3 Sure Signs Your Church Is Dying Fast

If churches could speak, what would their words be on their deathbeds?

You don't have to wait until a church closes its doors to hear some of the sentences that led to its death. Indeed, these three sentences, or something similar to the words, are pervasive in too many churches:

1. "We've never done it that way before." This sentence has become the classic example of a church resisting change. While we should never change or compromise the truths of God's Word, most change resistance is over methodologies, preferences, and desires. Unfortunately, these battles are typically over matters of minutia. One church recently had a battle over using a screen in the worship services. A matriarch argued that the apostle Paul did not have a projector screen. I guess Paul was comfortable with his printed hymnal.

2. "Our pastor does not visit enough." Churches with this complaint often have highly unreasonable expectations of the pastor. The pastor could visit members 24/7 and it would still not be enough. Some of the church members in these churches compare length and frequency of pastoral visits to see who is getting the most attention. These churches are inwardly focused and headed for decline and, many times, imminent death.

3. "People know where our church is if they want to come here." This sentence is fraught with problems. First, it assumes the church is a place, that the physical location of the church building is the church. The church, working under this erroneous assumption, can never get outside its walls because it will cease to be the church.

Second, this sentence is often used as an excuse for congregations to stay in their “holy huddles,” and never evangelize the community. Third, in some cases it is a cover-up sentence for prejudice and racism. The community outside the church has changed, but the church has not. The members of the church really do not want “those people” invading their fortress.

Numbers of churches are closing their doors every day. And the members of those churches would have never thought that sorrowful day would arrive.

You have an opportunity right now to look at the warning signs in your church. If these sentences, or some variation of them, are part of the common language of your congregation, the church is in trouble.

Yes, your church can turnaround in God’s power. Unfortunately, most church members of these congregations will not forego their personal preferences, comforts, and prejudices to change.

And that type of mindset, sadly, is a certain path toward death. {eoa}

Thom S. Rainer is the president of LifeWay Christian Resources. For the original article, visit [.](#)