

# 4 Tools for Overcoming Your Hurt Perpetrated by the Church

If there ever was a safe haven for you on this earth, it should be your local church. It's here – surrounded by people with a common creed built on faith in Jesus Christ – that you should be able to come and lay down your heaviest burdens and find encouragement without fear of judgment, ridicule, or being the object of someone's gossip.

Yet if you've been attending church for long enough, you've undoubtedly discovered that your house of worship isn't always the oasis that the Lord intended it to be. The more you are there, the more you will likely wonder at times if many of those who regularly gather inside its four walls even have a relationship with God.

In most cases, it's not that people who attend church set out to cause trouble within the congregation. The issue is that they are human beings in a fallen world. And wherever and whenever there are people, there will always be problems. The inevitable result of this is being hurt and disappointed by the same folks you'll share real estate with in heaven someday. Sad, isn't it?

The good news? Church hurt might rattle you, but it doesn't have to ruin you.

Here are four ways to stand strong in the face of adversity:

**1. Remember, it's about Jesus.** Attending church should be an act of worship to God; church shouldn't be a place where you go to simply feel good, satisfy your five senses, or find a spouse or new friends. Therefore, getting hurt by someone in the church isn't a reason to stay home or quit going

altogether.

Consider this exhortation from the apostle Paul in Ephesians 2:19-22: “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, *Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone*, in whom the entire building, tightly framed together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God through the Spirit” (MEV, emphasis added).

**2. Focus on the positives.** There’s always going to be something about your church that you would change. Maybe it’s the style of worship. Maybe it’s how people dress. Maybe it’s how long the services run. Maybe it’s how far away you must park. Maybe it’s even the preaching.

Try to focus on the things you like and enjoy about your church rather than the things you could leave off. You’ll be a lot more content this way and glean a lot more spiritual nourishment from services and other church events.

**3. Pray for your church and your pastor.** The more you take your church and your pastor to the Lord in prayer, the harder it’s going to be to find fault with them. That’s because prayer doesn’t just change circumstances; it changes us. And it has a way of softening our hearts toward those who might cause us the most frustration. Ask the Lord to give you grace and patience when dealing with fellow believers, just like you probably ask Him to do with those who’ve never surrendered their lives to Christ.

**4. Know that people aren’t your enemy.** Until we are in heaven with the Lord in our new, glorified bodies, people are always going to be people. They’re going to hurt you, disappoint you, aggravate you, annoy you and confuse you. Because every church is made up of people, every church is going to let you down at

some point – at least if you stay long enough to know what the people who attend are *really* like.

Ultimately, it's not the man or woman sitting down the pew from you at church who wants to cause you pain. Rather, "your adversary the devil walks around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8, MEV). Just remember that no follower of Jesus Christ is immune from being used by the enemy at times to stir up trouble. If someone in your church is bothering you, know that the devil is the one who's really behind it.

This will help you channel any anger or resentment you might feel toward Satan instead of directing it toward a brother or sister in Christ. And it'll also make it easier to forgive anyone who has been less than kind. {eoa}

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