

5 Reasons People Are Drifting From Church

There's a big difference between missing a Sunday and disconnecting from your church.

Vacations, travel for work and kids have travel ball. That's part of life. But when part of life turns into a different life, it may be time to rethink your new trend and the possible results.

A longtime friend and volunteer leader in his church had not attended in months. I asked him if something had upset him.

He said, "No, I love my church. We just got busy, started missing here and there, and then, well you know, it was just easier not to go. Oh, and we watch online sometimes."

We talked for a long time. It was a great conversation.

He concluded by saying, "You know, I really don't have a good reason for no longer attending church, I just got lazy. My family (they have three kids), and I will start again next week." And they did.

As human beings, we follow habits and patterns.

When it comes to church, drift leads to distance, and distance leads to disconnection.

The point of weekly worship is *not* attendance; it's *participation* in the body of Christ.

Christianity was never designed to be an independent endeavor. God created us to be in relationship with Him and each other. He made us on purpose with a purpose, and we live that out best together.

If you're not worshipping at your church much these days, I hope this post encourages you to return. There is something special about worship with the body of Christ.

People return to church for a variety of reasons, including a direct prompt from God.

Sometimes they return because of their kids. That's great! Sometimes it's because of personal tragedy, that's always heartbreaking, but I'm still glad they return. It might be a wedding or a funeral. Your church is happy to see you again, but I truly believe your life is more enriched when you regularly participate as part of the body of Christ. If any of the following excuses ring true for you, perhaps this is a good time to return to church.

5 Practical Responses to the Most Common Reasons for Drift

1. "The church doesn't meet my needs."

It's possible that a church may not meet all your needs; in fact, it's likely.

The question of expectations is usually at the core of this issue. What *should* a church, your church, be expected to do, offer or provide?

What is the role of the church, according to the Bible?

This post would be far too long if I wrote a detailed answer to that question, but I can summarize the primary purpose of the church in two words: "*make disciples*" (see Matt. 28:19-20).

That means the church's primary function is to help people mature in their faith, to grow spiritually. (And that includes first reaching those who are far from Jesus.)

After that, all "programs" are an option. Since no one church

can do everything, it's a choice the leaders must make.

The most common example of a church not meeting someone's needs is a complaint that the sermon lacks in some way. It doesn't "feed" them.

I'm the first to agree that the Sunday message should be well prepared, based on Scripture and bathed in prayer. But as a person grows in their spiritual maturity, they become able to dig out biblical truth and wisdom from the Bible on their own. The Sunday sermon becomes a gold mine for anyone to find a nugget of applicable truth and wisdom.

Ultimately, the church is a place where you help meet the needs of others.

2. "I attend online."

Online church is awesome. Technology helps advance the purpose of the church in significant ways. You might not be feeling well, traveling for work or on vacation. There are many times when online church is a great resource, and some people physically can't attend.

One advantage I love about online church is sharing a sermon with a friend who is not a Christian.

However, let me offer an analogy. Let's say a mom and dad's kids are grown and live in another state. So, they make a regular weekly Skype call to catch up. That's great. But my guess is that the family would *rather* be together in person. That experience is different. The connection is more personal, and they feel it. The result is memorable.

Let me push the point just a little with this example. No one wants a visit in the hospital from someone online; you appreciate the visit in person.

There is something about being together in person that the human spirit hungers for at a soul level. Online is great when

needed, but it was never designed as a substitute for the body of Christ and meeting the needs of others.

3. “My pastor made a decision I didn’t like.”

I’m a pastor, and *I make decisions I don’t like*. Yes, I’m smiling, but sometimes leaders have to make decisions that are not popular. Further, sometimes, we make mistakes; all leaders do. That’s not intended to justify poor leadership; it’s merely a reality.

Here’s a good question for you to ask. Was the decision sinful or subjective? My hunch is that the decision that bugged you was subjective, and not your preference.

Perhaps a better approach is to consider the big picture—with the following questions.

- Does your church teach the Bible?
- Is it loving and friendly to people?
- Are people saying yes to the invitation for eternal life from Jesus?
- Are people’s lives being changed?
- Does it make a difference in the community?

I’m sure you could ask more questions, but candidly, if *all that* is happening, it’s probably a great church, and the pastor a great pastor!

4. “I don’t need church to be a Christian.”

It’s true. You don’t need to go to church to be a Christian. But as I mentioned, Christianity was never designed to be a solo deal. From the garden of Eden to the covenant with Abraham, to your walk with Jesus, it’s all about relationship.

My experience is that the more independent and isolated a person is in their faith journey, the higher the likelihood they will stall out spiritually. As I stated in another post, “You tend to drift spiritually when you are not connected

relationally.” You can read that post [here](#).

As I read Scripture, the role of the pastor is not to “do” the work of ministry, but to train and equip the congregation to do the ministry God has designed for them to do (see Eph. 4:11-16) I’ve written a post on that subject, and you can read it [here](#).

God has a purpose for you that is part of His church. Don’t miss out.

So, let me say it again, a little differently.

You don’t need a church to be a Christian, but maybe the church needs you.

5. “The church is all about money.”

The church does need money to operate, and that won’t change. However, I can tell you that no church I know of charges you to attend. It’s free. That’s a great deal!

You can experience, enjoy and benefit from all your church offers for no charge at all—not many places like that.

The pastor may talk about money, but it’s an invitation to give, not a mandate. You don’t have to, and you really don’t.

Your pastor is just talking about what the Bible says. If the church has a strong vision, I’m certain they will seek financial resources to fulfill that vision, but that vision is all about reaching more people.

My strong hunch is that your church really isn’t all about money.

Here’s a helpful suggestion for you. Read what the Bible says about giving, and ask God what He wants you to do, and do that.

Make it about you and God. No one else. Tell God what you

think about giving to the church, He will listen. Then listen to what He says to you.

I genuinely hope this has been helpful and encouraging to you. Please feel free to leave a comment below. {eoa}

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