

9 Reasons Church People Can Be Downright Mean

To be honest, I've been blessed. In all the churches I've served as pastor or interim pastor, most of my members have been great people. Sometimes, though, a church member can be downright mean. Based on our Lawless Group interviews and surveys over the years, here are some of the reasons church members can be mean:

1. **All church members are still people.** That's not an excuse for meanness, though; it's just an admission of reality. Even saved people sometimes act like sinners when the right button gets pushed.
2. **Some are non-believers.** Even Jesus had one in His immediate group of 12 who was never a believer, and I doubt our churches will do better than Jesus did. Lost people will always act like lost people eventually—even when they don't think they're lost.
3. **Many are undisciplined.** Too many churches bring people into the local congregation, but then do nothing to disciple them. The new believers remain babies in Christ, even when they've been in the church for years. Usually, they whine a lot.
4. **Some are carrying burdens alone.** Often, we don't know what burdens others bear because we choose to carry our own pain alone. The father who can't find a job. The parents whose child has been arrested. The teen whose parents have just split up. Sometimes the anguish of life weighs so heavy on us that our tempers are short and our words are volatile.
5. **Some have maintained their control over the church by their meanness.** Over the years, their rude and unkind behavior has caused others to just give up and let them have their way. They gained control by meanness, and

they seek to keep it the same way.

6. **Some were given authority far too early.** When our churches give positions to those who haven't yet grown (*and many churches* grant positions on the basis of years in the church rather than on maturity in the faith), we shouldn't be surprised when those leaders fight to protect their toys. That's what kids do.
7. **Some are living in sin.** For anyone who is a true believer, the conviction of sin cuts deeply, but that doesn't always result in immediate repentance. Church members who remain in their sin for any length of time sometimes turn their conviction on others.
8. **Some have anger issues.** Maybe you know people like that. They're great one minute, but they erupt like a volcano the next. They're often quickly repentant, too, but they get no help in breaking the pattern.
9. **The church lets them be mean.** At the bottom line, church members are mean because the church allows them to be that way. For whatever reason—perhaps its fear of losing members—churches sometimes refuse to confront members who need to repentant of their rudeness and unkindness.

What other reasons would you add? {eo}

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