

# 1 Big Reason Spiritual People Are Leaving Churches

“And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:4-5).

A solid and stable friend of mine has left three churches in the last decade. She attended all of them for a period of time and then left.

In the first church, the pastor stopped having guest ministers in and the church began to dry up.

In the second church, there was a small stirring of the Spirit for awhile, but then the church turned to the seeker-friendly philosophy and tongues were confined to the back room.

In the third church, again it was alright for some time, but then the leadership began to move in a different direction and incorporate modern church growth principles and Madison Avenue tactics that grieved the Holy Spirit, and everything changed. Soon greasy doctrines slid into the church. She had no choice but to leave again.

To those really seeking to encounter God, soon the fancy stage, the bright lights, the cool bands and the video screens, just become white noise to them. They want Spirit and fire.

There was a season in Catherine Booth's life, the wife of Salvation Army founder William Booth, where she visited different churches in her area “looking for burning words.”

Smith Wigglesworth had a similar experience where the Spirit kept telling him to come out of dead works and dead churches.

He continued to move with God throughout his entire life.

One day a youth leader made an appointment with his pastor to discuss the implementation of a new program for the young people. The pastor, a deeply spiritual man, listened patiently. After the young man finished talking, the pastor responded with these words: "Mom (his wife) and I have found over the years that prayer, the Word and moving in the gifts of the Holy Spirit have always got the job done."

Think about these examples. The same thing is happening today. When pastors and church leaders fail to follow the plan of God some people leave because they are not being spiritually fed and fulfilled. Sometimes they cannot even articulate the reason they are leaving. They may tell you it's because of the music, or the preaching, or the youth and children's programs, but the underground reason may be because they are not encountering God any more.

I've read articles and exit polls about the many reasons people leave their churches, but most of them are surface reasons. They make it so complex and complicated causing more pastors and church leaders to continue re-hashing over the many ideas they could implement to increase their numbers. But is that what it's really about? The numbers? The Catholics have numbers; the Muslims have numbers; the Mormons have numbers. I would rather have 300 hungry-for-God people than 3,000 who want to be entertained.

Think about the many revivals throughout church history. Think about the ministers God has used to pioneer some of those revivals. It was the presence and power of God in these meetings and on these ministers that drew the people. Throughout history people have always craved the supernatural. I know that the local church also caters to people's natural lives and natural needs, and cannot be run like a revival. But the people also need continual renewals and refillings of the Holy Spirit.

If the presence and power of God are in manifestation and people still leave, what of it? Do you really want those kind of people in your church? Conversely, I know many spiritual people who are exiting their churches for lack of rain. They are not leaving due to offense or pride. They are not backsliding and leaving God, but they are leaving deadness, lightness and superficiality. There is a cry in God's people for the waters of the Spirit and fresh new wine.

"My soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory." (Ps. 63:2-3)

It is amazing what leaders can build and do without God, especially right here in America. But that doesn't mean that God's stamp of approval is on what you are building or doing. Divine power can only manifest when there is an end to self-sufficiency. If you become lukewarm and stop hungering and thirsting for the Spirit you will become a disappointment to God. I don't care how big of a building or how many people attend your church.

I love the local church. I love pastors who truly lay down their lives for the people they serve. I believe the local church to be the hope of the world. But God wants to move. He has a plan. He has a purpose. And if we don't line up with it He has no choice but to move where He finds His people and His leaders hungering for His presence and power.

I have a pastor friend who is leading a thriving church. The adults, the youth, and the children are on fire there. He has several guest speakers and at least two revivals every year. There is an expression in his church of a diversity of the Holy Spirit's ministries and manifestations that is rare today. He is a man of love and prayer and he listens to the Lord. By today's standards he is unconventional in that he refuses to compromise prayer, the Word, and the

moving of the Holy Spirit and implement the newest church growth programs or the latest fads.

This church has constant revival because there is liberty in the Spirit for the Lord to do what He wants to do. This church is producing spiritual people and not clock watchers and time servers.

Pentecostal meetings use to be called the gate of heaven because of all the manifestations of the Spirit and power of God they had. Testimonies of changed lives were frequent. These churches were known for tongues and power. One of the big reasons we are not seeing the power and the glory of God in many of our churches today is because we don't pray in tongues long enough until the Holy Spirit can take hold with us and give birth to these things.

Oh, people of God! Oh, ministers of the Lord! May we come to the end of our own wisdom, strength and sufficiency!

"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor. 3:5).

The apostle Paul was careful to place the focus of the people he ministered to on the power of God and not on the wisdom of men. He did not want to bring attention to his own persuasive words or enticing speech. He did not want people to place their confidence on man's ability, or charisma and personality. There was nothing in his ministry that was natural. With fear and trembling he sought to make Christ manifest everywhere he went.

Too many churches have lost the glory because their pastors and ministry leaders live too much in the natural. Get back in the Spirit. May we fall on our face and pray, and let the Spirit of God have His way.

*Pockets of true revival are breaking out across America. Want*

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