

5 More Reasons People Abandon the Local Church for House Churches

Editor's note: This is Part 2 in a 2-part series. Read Part 1 [here](#).

power of God isn't there.

I'll admit that I've been to some small group meetings that are electric! The Holy Spirit was blowing through that living room or office space like a wind and a fire. When you gather people who are all like-minded and hungry for Jesus, you can't help but see God respond.

I've been to local church meetings like this too, but they are rare. How often do you leave an institutional church remarking about how powerfully and supernaturally the Holy Spirit moved? Some of you reading this are truly blessed, and you'd respond by saying, "Nearly every Sunday!" Most would have to honestly admit that it's extremely uncommon or nonexistent.

Understand, I'm not talking about a great worship experience or an encouraging message. I mean, when is the last time the supernatural presence of God flooded the place to such an extreme that people were trembling, crying and being laid out all over the place? This should be the norm for the church. Pastors, until you can steward this call and facilitate a white-hot atmosphere of Holy Spirit power, it will be easy for people to be disappointed in your church.

And when Solomon finished praying, fire came down from the heavens and consumed the burnt offering and sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. And the priests were not able to enter into the house of the Lord, for the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house. And all the sons of

Israel saw when the fire came down and the glory of the Lord came on the temple, and they bowed their faces low to the ground on the pavement, and they worshipped confessing,

*“The Lord is good,
and His mercy endures forever” (2 Chron. 7:1-3).*

7. Services are predictable, overly structured and polished.

People who are hungry for authentic encounter with Jesus are done with perfectly orchestrated worship sets and precisely ordered services. House churches offer an opportunity to ditch the set lists and eliminate the clocks in favor of spontaneous, unpredictable and untimed worship, prayer and teaching along with a fervent pursuit of an ever-increasing, tangible presence of the Holy Spirit.

Instead of the spit and shine, they long for the messy, unpredictable, uncontrollable move of God that simply won't allow for manmade organization.

How often are the people in the pews crying out for the pastors to get out of the way and to let the Holy Spirit move? It's time we admit that our messages really aren't that great, and our worship sets aren't that special. Let's move aside, hit our knees and let the Holy Spirit run our services. I'll tell you this, when it happens, people won't be frustrated and disappointed, fleeing the church; they'll be flooding out from wherever they are to the place where the fire is burning.

The truth is, it can be easier to fan the flames of revival in a small house church than in a local church simply because local churches aren't typically focused on the remnant. They want the bigger crowds and are willing to compromise to ensure the people stay connected. Those in-house churches aren't focused on numbers or on drawing the seeker. They simply want God. Period. They have no order of service. They pray. They cry out. They minister to God and to each other.

While I acknowledge this reality, my belief is that we need to see such a remnant focus in the local church. I believe apostolic hubs, houses of prayer and house churches have emerged because local churches have abdicated their responsibilities to be centers of prayer and kingdom advance. They have become fully local to the detriment of the city vision. Prayer has taken a back seat because most resist such a devotion.

I love houses of prayer, apostolic hubs, para-church ministries and even healthy, rightly aligned house churches. I also love the local church and am campaigning for it to break out of the old, tired and predictable in favor of a Holy Spirit who cannot be controlled.

“He said to them, ‘It is written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer”’” (Matt. 21:13a).

8. Pastors who are functioning out of ability, creativity or charisma instead of anointing.

Stage shows seem to be overtaking much of the church today. Instead of contending for hours in the prayer rooms, pastors are often functioning from their creativity and charisma. The anointing simply isn't intense. They haven't been branded by the fire that can only be found at the altars.

How rare it is to see the man or woman of God trembling behind the pulpit after emerging from an encounter with Almighty God in the prayer room.

Leonard Ravenhill said, “Pastors who don't pray two hours a day aren't worth a dime a dozen.”

People can see right through pastors who are operating out of gifting instead of anointing. It leaves a very bad taste in their spirits. They want to be led by people who are continually encountering Jesus, people who aren't so confident

in their giftings that they simply put together “creative” programs, conferences, sermon series and whatever else they can orchestrate.

That being said, house church friends, I challenge you to re-read the appeal from Debra at the beginning of this article. Have enough compassion for God’s leaders that you don’t rise up in pride, determined to be more spiritually driven than they are. In fact, I bet most house-church people are no more spiritually devoted than most local church pastors.

“Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17).

9. A lack of focus on the greater church.

House-church folks don’t like to be limited in their church experience. They don’t value, and actually devalue, the demand many pastors have to commit fully and only to their specific local church. It stinks of personal kingdom building instead of truly being kingdom minded.

As I said above, we need to encourage people to invest in a variety of churches and ministries in our region. In fact, pastors should be very active in supporting other churches and ministries. Lead the people in your church to conferences, prayer events, special church meetings, revival services and strategic kingdom happenings in the region.

House churches can easily become equally unhealthy when they become inward focused and disconnected from the greater city church. In fact, many house churches regularly fall into this trap.

Out of one side of their mouth they confess to being “kingdom focused,” while on the contrary, they never visit and lock arms with other local churches, ministries or functions in the region.

“And continuing daily with one mind in the temple, and

breaking bread from house to house" (Acts 2:46a).

10. They are plain bored with the old wineskin.

Church as we know it is done. This is the driving message behind my book *The Coming Church*. I've preached about this, written about this and led movements with this in mind. The old wineskin must give way to the new. The house church, for many, seems to be a logical step out of the old and into the new.

The reality is that the new wineskin looks nothing like anything we see in local or house churches.

However, one key component that many house-church enthusiasts may not be too excited about in the new wine skin is authority. The government of God will be firmly established, and the fivefold ministry will be foundational. No longer can people just do as they please, presuming that God is their only authority. We will function within kingdom government, and we must acknowledge the various leaders in the region.

"And no one pours new wine into old wineskins, or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, and the wine is spilled, and the wineskins will be marred. But new wine must be poured into new wineskins" (Mark 2:22).

House Church or Local Church?

Both. Neither. Actually, it's the city church we should be advancing. Local churches are important as larger groups of people lock in to contend for revival and advance the kingdom. Smaller churches that are more keenly focused will exist in homes alongside the rest of the church of the city. Apostles, prophets and other leaders will serve with sobriety and boldness.

The key is having pure motives, honoring all and being faithful to the calling and the process God has given you to

steward whether it's in a local church, house church, apostolic hub, house of prayer or other community of faith.

We all want revival, or, rather, we all think we want revival. We crave God's presence. We want the fire. But, let's all be challenged. When the fire comes, will we honestly allow it to consume us? Will we stay devoted, humble and surrendered? Or will we rise up in pride, dissatisfied with the way things are unfolding and move out in rebellion to start an alternate, individualistic, isolated, coven in the church? {eo}

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