

# What American Christians Can Learn from Iranian Believers

The Iranian government makes no secret about its attitude toward Christianity. Such worship in the country's language is essentially outlawed, as is any Christian literature written in their language. Officially, less than 1% of Iran's 90 million people are Christian.

Although Iran has forbidden Christian church services for 47 years, many researchers consider it to be the home of the world's fastest growing evangelical movement. How can that be? Because believers there have no choice but to be the church rather than go to church. They live with God directly, without buildings or programs.

Similarly, believers in China and North Korea meet in small groups of two or three, remembering Jesus' promise in Matthew 18:20: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

American Christians can learn an important lesson from our brothers and sisters in countries hostile to the Gospel. We should not be just visiting God on Sundays but actually sharing His address daily.

Too many people chase moments trying to fill their lives instead of receiving life to fill their every moment. The good news is that God does not want us to visit Him occasionally – He wants to move in and make His home with us.



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In John 14:23, Jesus makes this amazing promise: "If a person really loves me, he will keep my word, obey my teaching, and

my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." Notice Jesus did not say "visit" – He said "make our home."

Many believers live with a distorted map of their relationship with God. They picture themselves on one side, a church building in the middle, and God somewhere far away on the other side. This creates an invisible wall that blocks the flow of God's love and blessings.

We say "Jesus lives in my heart" on Sunday, then tell our kids we are "going to God's house" across town. This contradiction reveals our confused understanding of where God actually wants to dwell.

God told King David and the prophets that He doesn't live in man-made buildings. When Jesus died on the cross, the temple veil was torn from top to bottom, signifying that the barrier between God and humanity was forever eliminated. Mark 15:38 records this pivotal moment. This wasn't just symbolic – it was God's declaration that He no longer wanted walls between Himself and His children.

The Greek word "ecclesia," translated as "church," means a called-out assembly – a governing body that moves and makes decisions. It is not a static building but a dynamic community of believers who carry God's presence wherever they go.

Jesus preached from Peter's boat, not from a cathedral. He said "Follow me" – a call to movement, not to sit in pews. Religion puts people in boxes, but God puts us in His love, which restores movement and blessing to our lives.

Of course, there is nothing wrong or biblically contrary in going to a building called a church, a chapel or cathedral. The compromise that quietly sabotages our life is when we substitute. There is no substitute for BEING the body of Christ. That is our identity. It is our Kingdom citizenship.

If we buy into an ideology promoting attendance to church as a virtue, it unfortunately includes the “soft” belief that you also leave church. We cannot leave church– we ARE the church. God has called us to be living stones built into His Ecclesia which we never, ever leave. As a child of God, we are reborn of the Spirit to be spirit –not part-time – but always. Could our confidence in a physical entity be an unintentional breach in our faith distracting us from abiding in a spiritual state 24/7?

When someone truly understands that they share the same address as God, everything changes. They can begin to pick up His behavior, His joy, His character, His benefits, His love, and His wisdom.

Acts 17:28 beautifully captures this reality: “In God we live and move and have our being.” Notice the word “move” – life with God is dynamic, not static.

In Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus reveals something shocking. Many people who prophesied, cast out demons, and did mighty works in His name will hear Him say, “I never knew you.” The crucial question isn’t whether we know Jesus, but whether Jesus knows us.

This knowing comes through intimacy – through opening our hearts and lives to God’s daily presence. It is not about religious performance but about spiritual relationship.

Hebrews 11:6 tells us that “without faith, it’s impossible to please God.” Performance doesn’t please God – faith does. And faith becomes powerful when it moves and becomes kinetic.

There is no power to live for God when we do not live with God. We cannot serve someone effectively if we don’t spend time with them, learn their ways, and understand their heart.

Jesus came to destroy every wall of division that contradicts

His kingdom way. Ephesians 2:14 declares: "For He is our peace. He has made us both one and has broken down the hostile dividing wall between us."

Romans 8:38-39 provides wonderful assurance: "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created things shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

No organization, denomination, tradition or event can separate us from God's love. We belong in His family.

Let's challenge ourselves to stop "going to church" and start "being the church." Instead of compartmentalizing God into Sunday mornings, let's invite Him to make His home with us throughout every day. We can open our hearts to His presence in the workplace, during family time, and in our daily decisions.

God did not send Jesus to make church members – He sent His Son to adopt us into His family. We have the same address as the Creator of the universe. That is not just theology; that is our daily reality.

Welcome home.

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