
Subject: When you choose a church...

Posted by [Abiding](#) on Tue, 26 May 2009 20:51:25 GMT

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(I'm not sure where to post this, so if there's a better place, feel free to move the discussion there.)

Let's say you are currently looking for a church so you can assemble together with other believers. You pray, trusting God to lead you, but so far, there has been no supernatural revelation or even quiet impression to tell you which one to choose. So you look through the yellow pages and begin to visit churches in your area.

If your area is anything like what we have run into around here, you might have the following selection:

1. Large charismatic non-denominational church with plenty of programs, a multi-million dollar children's building, pastor with probably other gifts besides teaching, but believes in healing and being a prayer warrior, believes in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but doesn't allow them to be spontaneously shared in case there are inappropriate displays or flesh or the enemy, etc., Believes in "Body Ministry" but defines it as working in the programs and before one can lead in any of these areas, they must be checked out to make sure they're giving at least 10% regularly (too bad for those who choose to give anonymously!).
2. Medium-sized charismatic non-denominational church with plenty of programs and that also tends to embrace a lot of far out things that come down the charismatic pipeline. Wild stuff! But very loving and family-like. Just not a whole lot of discernment.
3. Smaller charismatic churches that also tend to embrace a lot of wild stuff, too, including things like the Todd Bentley revival, sending busloads down to pick up the spirit (hope they have repudiated this!) Lots of young people who are enthusiastic, but not sure how much of the Word is taught.
4. House Church-type meetings that in the interest of being so anti-traditional churches, have fallen into their own mold of resisting all authority and leadership. (Except the "unspoken" type. You just know what is accepted and what is not. A subtle controlling influence is experienced!) Whoever feels led to teach, does, as well as whoever wants to sing songs, etc.,

OR

- 4b. House Church-type meetings that have a strong controlling leader who is pretty down on everyone else who isn't doing it the exact same way their group is experiencing church, believes in the gifts, but has become in-grown and suspicious of others. You have to prove yourself to be accepted as one of them.

5. Small church with pastor and people who truly seem to love God's Word --but don't have the light on the gifts of the Holy Spirit or healing (beyond "if it be Thy Will") being for today. But they are humble. Teachable. Loving. Good solid Bible teaching (except in the "charismatic areas")

6. Denominational "Bible" churches --name your brand here! Lots of them everywhere with varying degrees of Biblical teaching. I'm talking about the ones who still carry a Bible and open it up and teach from it.

Now, still assuming the Lord hasn't spoken to you yet about where to go , where do you begin? What issues can you overlook for now and what can you absolutely not overlook.

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...

Posted by [james](#) on Tue, 26 May 2009 23:40:34 GMT

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Hey now, Abiding, I thought you was going to solve the problem by presenting a number to chose. Try selecting one from a city of one million(thereabouts), if you just look in the phone book there are literally thousands of churches around here.

Not to make excuses, but maybe I am, living in a city where I know no one and am not connected by family or friends here, it seems to be just about overwhelming in just having an inkling of where to start. I would love to visit a home church or small assembly...but I don't know of any, or know how to go about find out.....suggestions?

BTW: Unless The Holy Spirit speaks to me and tells me differently, I'm not putting myself in situations where I sit there pleading The Blood of Jesus over my mind against false doctrines, traditions, 'works programs', and the like. I let my 'feelings' of isolation, hunger for fellowship, 'guilt' over not being 'in church', override my better judgment about 5 years ago. I jumped in with both feet, got talked into leading study groups, organizing 'angel food' ministries, was asked to be part of the 'leadership team'(I'm not sure, William if I was a eldership guy, or what...probably, or what. Didn't get paid for it, but it was quite an expensive position from my standpoint) I won't repeat that experience, I'm positive that I fell to the lowest point of my walk with Jesus during that period of time. Don't tell me compromise and just deciding what to 'overlook' won't effect a person, you either get up and leave or you go along with the program, first thing you know, Santa Claus is walking around in the church and people are having nurses come give out flu shots...Oh, and the study group? "James, you can't just think because The Bible says something, that it's talking to you". Yeah, that's what I was told, FAITH? Just a concept to discuss, bout like the Sermon on The Mount, let's talk about it...What? Live like that, are you nuts...what if? you mean you think Jesus

'literally' meant?....

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...

Posted by [william](#) on Wed, 27 May 2009 00:51:32 GMT

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I know a little about what you are speaking of, but look at it this way James, there are other believers out there. Like I said to you before, and Grandom repeated it, it isn't likely that we will suddenly wake up one day and find out that there is another FA that has opened its doors.

It is interesting that the Hebrews passage doesn't mention anything about the institution of "Church" at all. It's all about assembling with other believers, and I'm quite sure that James isn't the only one left in the big metropolis of B'ham. If you are, then I'd be on the lookout for 3 Angels that may be coming to your city... listen to them, and don't look back when they lead you out!

Think about this... most of our complaints center on the structure of the Churches we have attended. How things are run, whether the gifts are allowed to flow freely, the leadership structure, the leadership's vision, etc., etc.. We really cannot fault the sheep for the woeful condition that prevails in most Churches. Most of the time the sheep don't even know that there might be a better way. Are they any less God's heritage? Could they benefit from someone (like yourself) who might be able to enlighten them on different things (like the christmas program)? Why should you get bent out of shape when they get all excited about some program? That may be all they know. Many see this as serving Christ... they want to do it because they love Him. How can you fault them for this?

Were it not for God's grace in showing you a better way you might be just as caught up in those programs as they are. How did you find out about "the better way"? If it wasn't through another individual's passion about Jesus, was it by direct revelation? Be that individual to them... let them see your passion for the Word. Let them see how it is working in your life.

I don't know how you can do it without mingling with them. What if brother Freeman had taken the same path that some of us have taken? He actually went to other assemblies, and I'm pretty sure he had to deal with

a lot of fluff in order to do so. If he had stayed home and continued to study the Word and fellowshiping with God, we wouldn't be here. Sometimes we forget that he started out in a denominational setting. He actually listened to another individual share the Word concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the rest, as they say, is history. What about the guy who shared with him? We might end up being that "guy" for someone else. Don't limit God.

I have to agree with Grandom that it is easy to fall into a mentality that emphasizes our own needs over the needs of others. "We" don't go anywhere, because "we" don't get fed, or because "we" get offended by the programs, etc.. It really isn't about us at this point. We already know where the feeding trough is located. We've been feeding ourselves for a long time now. We know that we shouldn't get offended, because "we" are dead!

A major part of our spiritual education was so that "we" could be used to take God's message to others... I don't think we need a supernatural revelation to do that, do you?

If you go into a city (or a church) that doesn't receive the message you've got, then move on to another, and shake off the dust. The danger we face is, after being enlightened, we go back to needing someone else to teach us again:

Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

Heb 5:13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

Heb 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

We've had the strong meat and it is time we ought to be teachers.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...
Posted by [JWBTI](#) on Wed, 27 May 2009 01:05:28 GMT
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Sister Abiding,

Number 5;
Has the keys to my choice, Humble-Teachable and Loving !
With the knowledge that God has given the two of you, it wouldn't be too long
Before you'd have them speaking in tongues and laying hands on the sick !

Freely you have received, Freely Give !

I speak from hands on experience and from seeing the fruit of my labor in Christ Jesus ! To Him
be the Glory !

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...
Posted by [sparkles](#) on Wed, 27 May 2009 01:14:56 GMT
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Greetings Abiding!

Interesting topic you have started. Personally I would have to say I am not interested in going to any place just because there are believers. If others feel different that is between them and the Lord, but for me I am trusting God to put me in a local assembly in His time. Yes, it seems like a famine, but then the Lord told us it would be like that. We were all told to get faith in our hearts because the local assembly would not always be there for us. Brother Freeman many, many times encouraged us to hear the Lord for ourselves and get faith in our hearts, because the time would come where it would be just us and Jesus. I remember a friend of mine telling me to never put anyone on a pedestal because when that person falls or lets you down, it can be very troubling/devastating to ones beliefs.

There is a verse in I Cor. 1:10 "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." To me this means that the assembly God puts me in will be one where we agree. Of course this doesn't mean that in every single thing everyone will be in step since there are different levels of growth in the body of Christ. But I believe we will be of one mind on the doctrine of Christ, believing tongues is the evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, Healing, Deliverance, the gifts being manifested in the church, faith, the rapture, the millinium, the Bible being something we can stake our very lives on, and much more.

It will be a place where holiness is taught, separation from the world and its ways and the pastor won't be afraid to speak out against such things as the deception/seduction/evil of TV and movies. And there will be a respect for being in the house of God. The ministers won't be afraid to warn of errors and deceptions.

It will be a place where the gifts of I Cor. 12-14 and Rom. 12 are practiced, where it is body all fitly joined together. Where people worship God, not the cheap imitation of worship where it sounds like rock and roll and where the instruments are so loud some have to wear ear plugs, not to mention the demonic beat in some churches. It will be a church where we can raise our hands and praise the Lord, where the gifts of the Holy Spirit are manifested, where the preacher doesn't have to be nailed down to a certain number of minutes to preach. No bulletin to tell the Holy Spirit how to proceed.

If someone believes God is leading them to go to a church, it is between them and the Lord, but give me the same freedom to be lead of the Lord to not go. A little leaven does leaven the whole lump, and personally I believe God has me where He does right now, and I will continue to wait on Him for His best for me.

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...
Posted by [JWBTI](#) on Wed, 27 May 2009 01:20:52 GMT
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James wrote:

Hey now, Abiding, I thought you was going to solve the problem by presenting a number to chose. Try selecting one from a city of one million(thereabouts), if you just look in the phone book there are literally thousands of churchs around here. Not to make excuses, but maybe I am, living in a city where I know no one and am not connected by family or friends here, it seems to be just about overwhelming in just having an inkling of where to start. I would love to visit a home church or small assembly...but I don't know of any, or know how to go about find out.....suggestions?

James,

I got two suggestions:

Mt 7:7-8,

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. (KJV)

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...
Posted by [JWBTI](#) on Wed, 27 May 2009 02:35:49 GMT
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Sage wrote:

If someone believes God is leading them to go to a church, it is between them and the Lord, but give me the same freedom to be lead of the Lord to not go. A little leaven does leaven the whole lump, and personally I believe God has me where He does right now, and I will continue to wait on Him for His best for me.

Rons Reply:

How can God lead you when you won't obey His Written Word !
(I'm not lead of the Lord ??????????????)

Lets see ?

John 15:16-17

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and
ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that
whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.
17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Mt 28:19-20,

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you
always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Acts 1:8,

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses
unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the
earth. (KJV)

I see the term: Command in two of these verses.
I don't see anything about being lead of the Lord.

Acts 1: Did Jesus tell them, If you are lead of The Lord to wait till you are endued with Power ? Or
did He command them to wait ?

What good is it to have the Holy Spirit, if you are not going to be a witness ?

If youâ€™re not going to use the Gifts God has given you, send them my way. I can use all the help I can get !

Blessing Sister

Ps: You are Free, but make sure itâ€™s the right Lord leading you !

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...
Posted by [sparkles](#) on Thu, 28 May 2009 04:05:59 GMT
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Hi Ron,
I appreciate your response and obvious desire to please the Lord and be a witness for Him.
I would like to respond to a couple comments you made.

The first one:

How can God lead you when you wonâ€™t obey His Written Word !
(Iâ€™m not lead of the Lord ??????????????????)

I want you to know that I did not say you were not lead of the Lord, I don't even really know you or the life you live. I don't know most of your convictions or beliefs so I cannot say you aren't lead of the Lord. By the same token you cannot say I don't obey the written word just because I don't believe God wants me to go to a denominational/charismatic church. I believe it is God who sets us in a local assembly to be used by Him in body ministry, so if I have not been set by God in a church here in Grand Rapids or any place else, then I am not going to go and try to attach myself to someplace I don't belong. I have visited some churches and will know when I am "home."

The Second comment:

Acts 1: Did Jesus tell them, If you are lead of The Lord to wait till you are endued with Power ? Or did He command them to wait?

Yes, the people whom Jesus had assembled, He certainly did command them to not depart Jerusalem, but wait. But why wait? Aren't we suppose to just go join ourselves to a local church? All through the Word God's people are told to wait on the Lord, for his direction, and leading. Isa. 48:17 "I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shalt go."

Psalm 23:1-3 "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

John 10:3b-5 "...he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."

The Third Comment:

What good is it to have the Holy Spirit, if you are not going to be a witness ?

May I ask to be a witness where? In the church? I was a witness in a church I visited, and saw people baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of tongues, but was told that is not what our church believes or teaches, so stop sharing this.

Ron, I can be a witness wherever I am. At work, at home, at the store, in a restaurant. We can be witnesses by sharing a kind or encouraging word, opening a door, letting someone cut in front of us in traffic, giving a waitress a generous tip when she is having a bad day. There are alot of ways to be a witness besides in a church setting. God can use us in the gifts of the Holy Spirit and not have it be in a church setting, although I do miss the gifts we had at FA.

As far as not obeying the written word, I do not forsake the assembling of myself together with believers. Some of us get together for fellowship and hear messages together and share and pray for each other. Wherever 2 or 3 are gathered there is Jesus in our midst. I do look forward to the day when I am set in a local assembly, but in the mean time I will do what I believe Jesus would have me do. And yes Ron, it is the right Lord leading me into all the truth (John 16:13.) Why? Because He said He would and I am going to be foolish enough to believe Him.

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...

Posted by [grandom](#) on Thu, 28 May 2009 18:43:35 GMT

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Abiding wrote on Tue, 26 May 2009 15:51

Now, still assuming the Lord hasn't spoken to you yet about where to go , where do you begin? What issues can you overlook for now and what can you absolutely not overlook.

Some thought provoking questions Abiding.

I have answers but most, from what I have observed so far wont satisfy the excuses offered for not going to church.

I also have questions.

Did the church dispensation end with the death of Brother freeman? It seems all that went to FA think so. We just cant find FA again so The Holy Spirit just hasnt LED us to go some where else.

How did we all get to FA in the first place. Can any one stand up and testify, The Holy Spirit told me to go to a cornfield in Northern In. and there we would find the PERFECT church?

No I submit that some one reached out to us in our denominational or maybe charismatic church or no church and LED us to the cornfield.

So why is it now that with all the teaching we have received we cant humble ourselves enough to get out to less then perfect churches to instruct people in what the Lord has given us? I've tried it and it didnt work or they kicked me out. I'm glad Paul didnt give up when some thing didnt go his way?

If I recall correctly Paul had problems in churches that had just been started way back in Jesus time. How is it that we expect churches to be perfect in our time? Any body want to hazard a guess as to how many problems DR. Freeman had to deal with that we no nothing about? Okay now we have the argument well where two or three are gathered in my name were assembling. Which of the two or three is the pastor? Which other one is an elder? That description of a church really doesnt hold water.

When Paul wrote of the churches it was always a church at a specific location. The church at Galatia, the church at Ephesus etc. Jesus in Rev referenced churches at a specific location. It wasnt some mystical universal church that we all belong to..

Did the Holy Spirit list all the reasons for a member to be apart of a local body in error? Is it not applicable today any more?

What about James 5 If any sick among you let him call the elders of the Church? What if a christian brother or sister in a church needed prayer for healing and you or I was the only one in that church that believed in divine healing? Is it not that we should be some where to be available to do what we were taught?

No my friends. I think we violate to many scriptures telling us to get out and be and do rather then to sit and wait.

Some how I can hear satan saying. Yeh hath God said. He didnt mean it for you did he? Surely he wants you to be still, maybe emulate the Monks. Live in your own little world and if those poor deceived people that attend those less then perfect churches

well after all. It is there own fault. They should have believed God to lead them out of there.
To whom much has been given, much is required.
Dick

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...
Posted by [sparkles](#) on Fri, 29 May 2009 02:16:28 GMT
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Hi Grandom,
I would like to speak for myself and say I do not believe the church age ended when Brother Freeman died, quite the contrary I am believing and expecting something better than Faith Assembly. God gave us something wonderful at FA and a very good word to encourage us to walk in all the light we have, but it was not an end to all God has for us.
I really don't believe you can say because we aren't going to church that we have not humbled ourselves. I know this could be a somewhat contentious topic if we would let it, but I don't think it has to be. Because I am not doing what you do in this area does not mean I am sinning. I was wondering what kind of church you go to. I am not asking so I can criticize, but just wonder where some of the folks who post on this site go to church. I have visited Christian Reformed with a friend, visited the Assembly of God Church, visited a Presbyterian church, visited a Baptist church, went to home meetings, but have not found home yet. When I left the denominational church to become a part of the Grand Rapids meeting and a regular attendee at FA it was because the denom. church did not have the life or word or worship I found at these other meetings. People were excited to talk about the Lord and looked forward to the church night, but I have not seen that in the churches I have visited. Sometimes a dullness can come upon someone when they listen to a watered down, compromising message, that's just the way people are. Some places you would call for the elders of the church, but do they know how to pray in faith for you? Will they believe with you for a healing or tell you it is too serious you need to seek medical attention when really all you want to do is trust God. I certainly don't have all the answers to why it is the way it is, but I do know God is in control.

I do enjoy and am challenged by your posts Grandom, thank you for the time and effort you put in for us. Lord bless you.

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...
Posted by [grandom](#) on Fri, 29 May 2009 19:37:32 GMT
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Hi Sue

Just a quick note.

I'm not ignoring you.

we have out of town guests for the next few days so will get back with you next week.

Thanks for the kind words..

lord bless you.

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...

Posted by [JWBTI](#) on Tue, 02 Jun 2009 22:10:45 GMT

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Greeting Sage,

I pray that my posting hasn't been too pointed or offensive to you or anyone else. I'm just trying to speak what's on my heart. Grandam is more gifted than I am when it comes to posting. I do better face to face.

I live in a small county in north west Ohio. The population in the county is about 30,000 with maybe 50 churches and or gatherings. Not a lot to choose from. I've been here about 5 years now and have attended a number of these gatherings. I can't say that they would all welcome me back. I needed the Fellowship, so I keep Searching, I'm currently involved in 4 meetings every week now.

2 - Meetings at a Denominational Non-Charismatic Church with a Charismatic Pastor that is teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit! Oh my ! Sunday Am, is Praise & Worship and a time to tell what God is doing in your life. (Do you know that you can preach a sermon in a Testimony?) We've been involved in the Bible Study on Weds night for over a year now, and I am now currently teaching on Devine Healing out of the Sermon on the Mountain Mt 5-7.

I'm also involved in a house group on Thursday (Non-Charismatic) teaching on The Gifts of the Holy Spirit and Devine Healing!..They keep inviting me back !?

Sunday nights I meet with a small, independent, Charismatic group of Believers in the Basement of an old Motel. Many of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are in operation at any given time. This is a time of refreshing, of sharing and of receiving.

Paul and Peter and many of the others in the Book of Acts, went House to House, Church to Church, synagogue to synagogue. Some times they were received and times they were thrown out and stoned and beatenâ€¦..Iâ€™m glad they donâ€™t use rocks todayâ€¦.(smile)

At times I wanted to give up on some of these saints (you knowâ€¦poor meâ€¦pity me !)
But Grandom encourage me in the Lord and I stayed in the Battle (Thanks Brother)
Over the past year or so I have shared some of the Testimonies of these people on this Boardâ€¦The Word that we have will change lives, but others will never know it unless you proclaimed it and Fight For the Truth !

Just to make a point:

I fumbled thru a teaching one night at a small gathering. It was pathetic. It was the Word but the messenger stumbled thru the whole thing. God has His donkeys. After the message the pastor asked For pray and was instantly healed. That changed his whole thinking ref: Gods Word and Devine Healing. That affected his whole Church and many others in the community. You just donâ€™t know how many people that you may affect when you stand up and speak out for the truth !

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...

Posted by [william](#) on Wed, 03 Jun 2009 01:22:07 GMT

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Hi Ron, great testimony!

I really identify with your p.s., I've muddled through a few like that.
It seems as if you are swimming upstream with your hands tied behind your back, wondering how anything good could come from what you are saying, and then later find out that you said something that happened to directly address someones problem... go figure! O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...
Posted by [Abiding](#) on Wed, 03 Jun 2009 01:35:52 GMT
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Ron, I can't tell you how much your message blessed me! I have been pondering and praying about what you shared in your earlier message in this thread, too. (About which church you'd choose.)

In the past, I have been reluctant to go to non-charismatic churches with the idea that there wouldn't be the freedom to use the gifts God has given, but I realized, God has been able to use us in the gifts He's given to minister in many ways to non-charismatic brothers and sisters over the years.

In fact, it has been the Holy Spirit Who has opened the doors of opportunity! (We just don't go around tacking "Thus saith the Lord" on what we believe God has shown us or say "God showed me...", or blow them away with "charismatic lingo" etc.,)

Quote:Just to make a point:

I fumbled thru a teaching one night at a small gathering. It was pathetic. It was the Word but the messenger stumbled thru the whole thing. God has His donkeys. After the message the pastor asked For pray and was instantly healed. That changed his whole thinking ref: Gods Word and Devine Healing. That affected his whole Church and many others in the community.

Praise the Lord!

Quote:You just donâ€™t know how many people that you may affect when you stand up and speak out for the truth !

AMEN! That is so true. There is such a tremendous need to share the Word of God and let others know that they can TRUST the Lord and apply His Word to their lives today.

I pray that we will all greet each day with the expectation that God will use us to encourage *someone* and prepare in such a way that we stay filled up with fresh bread (His Word!), ready to share it with all He brings across our path, and that we remain sensitive to His Holy Spirit to go where He would have us go!

I appreciate this fellowship here. Thanks to all who are posting! I look forward to participating more soon, too. (It's a stormy night and I'd better shut down my computer now.)

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...
Posted by [sparkles](#) on Wed, 03 Jun 2009 02:34:33 GMT

Hi Ron,

Thanks for sharing the testimony, it is a blessing. As far as myself, I am not offended. Sometimes when people write, it doesn't convey the tone of voice or facial expressions, so someone can say something and not mean it offensively, but someone else can take it wrong. I am very blessed by you and the things you share, and hope you do more of it. I think it is good to challenge each other in a right way, after all "iron does sharpen iron." I also do not want to be offensive to others, and try not to write things that may be taken as too blunt or too rude or offensive. I figure we all have things in our lives that need changing, and do appreciate when someone, in a right spirit, says something. Doesn't mean I'll change right away but at least it is a starting point if indeed it is an area I need to change in. It is important to let the Lord change us and get it in our hearts so we will not be shaken when challenged by the devil. Too many people have just been hearers of the word and not doers and when the wind and waves came they didn't make it, as their house was built upon the sand (Matt. 7:24-27.) I want to be one who hears the Lord say: This is the way, walk ye in it.

This writing is certainly a learning experience and I believe we all need to give people room to grow in Christ, but at the same time if heresy is ever promoted to expose it and get rid of it. These are perilous times that we are living in and the devil is throwing all kinds of lies and deceptions at us, so we need to be on guard and warn the flock of God when we see heresies creeping in. I only write that generally, not implying anything about anyone, as I am enjoying the postings.

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...

Posted by [jismazed](#) on Sat, 06 Jun 2009 05:26:39 GMT

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A number of Biblical principles can be applied to this question.

A. When the word "you" appears in the NT, the majority of time it is plural, which is something that is lost in English translations. For example, "He who has done a good work in all of you (referring to the Phillipian church) will be faithful to complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." He was talking to them collectively, as a group, not to an individual. The only way to be able to apply that passage according to its intent is to think of it as a promise to the community of believers of which you are a part. If you are not a part of such a community, it is harder to make it a reality in your life.

B. The NT churches often had severe problems. Look at the immorality and lack of order among the Corinthians, the legalism among the Galatians, the lukewarmness among the Laodiceans or

the strange doctrines among the Ephesians. The list could go on. If we were transported in time and walked into one of those churches in, say, 65 A.D., we would be shocked in some cases. The apostles such as Paul and John did not tell the believers in those cities to avoid such churches. The exception would be regarding those churches that taught false doctrine about essentials such as who God is, who Jesus is, what Jesus did for us and how we are to be in right relationship with God. He did tell them to administer church discipline in some cases.

If we acknowledge the example set for us in the NT period, then we have to accept that true, godly churches will nevertheless be messy sometimes, and not always fitting our concept of the "ideal" church.

C. The parable of the talents is relevant to this discussion. The first two stewards made the most of what they were given. The third steward focused on what he did not have, and was so afraid of taking a risk that he did not use his talent at all. If in your area all you have are 1-talent level churches, make the most of it. When my children complain and compare themselves to others who seem to be doing better, I remind them to not focus on what they don't have, but rather what God has given them. So the Lord is with His children and church. If the Lord has given you a #5 or #2 church to work with, make the most of it. If all you have is a weekly Bible study with some people at work, make the most of it. Don't squander what you have been given.

D. There are some scriptures that address the matter directly. For example, I Corinthians 12-14 was written to a local community of believers, although there may have been several different meetings of believers in that large city. Paul was instructing them as to how to function as a Spirit-filled organism. In the middle of his instruction on the gifts he reminded them of what matters most- love. Without it the gifts mean nothing. When you look for a church, look for one in which the members love one another. Although there are other things to consider, love for God and each other is a top priority. That is how you know the true disciples of Jesus. Real agape. Not the sappy kind.

I do find it disturbing that FA is still being held as some sort of gold standard of church. As helpful as some of the teaching was, and in spite of the good memories some of us have, the fact is that FA and the churches like it were quite sick and dying. I'm sorry if it makes some of you mad, but I have to call it like I see it. If you do not acknowledge the dysfunction of FA it will be hard for you to recognize it elsewhere, and you will be vulnerable to another abusive church in time. Hobart Freeman was a teacher, not a pastor, and no one should ever think of him as an ideal example of one who shepherds a church. His system of church leadership was unscriptural, 90% of the gifts that operated were utterance gifts, the teaching became imbalanced and people left there terribly wounded, beat up and disillusioned. That's not the kind of church you want to look for.

If you cannot find a church that you believe to be blessed by the Lord, you might be right- none of them are good. On the other hand, it might be that you are majoring on minor matters or minoring on major matters, and allowing small annoyances to cloud your discernment.

Regardless, I know for certain that the answer is not to be a lone ranger. Dismembered arms cannot be nourished by the rest of the body, nor can it help the body. They have to be attached in order to live and function.

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...

Posted by [grandom](#) on Sun, 14 Jun 2009 11:18:39 GMT

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When I responded to Abidings thread on when you chose a church, I posted what I believed The Lord

Gave me to post. When I post I take it very seriously. First I have to be sure that I myself live it. I knew that I would probably step on some toes since most who attended Fa or satellite church's have an issue today with church attendance. I have since been attacked spiritually, physically (same source) and yes even via email. Like Paul I count it all joy.

I hope and pray that we sing this song in church today.

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.
Refrain:
It is well, with my soul,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.
Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.
My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:
If Jordan above me shall roll,
No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.
But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,
The sky, not the grave, is our goal;

Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!
Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul!
And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.

I can true fully say. It is well with my soul.

Lord Bless

Grandom.

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...
Posted by [Abiding](#) on Thu, 18 Jun 2009 00:48:29 GMT
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It Is Well With My Soul is one of my all time favorites, Grandom!

I was very blessed by what the pastor shared Sunday morning --a serious call to prayer for the entire church, as well as exhorting all to make sure their own lamps were filled with oil and that they were not relying on others' prayer life and Bible study to get them by --that they needed to be in the Word themselves and in prayer to be able to stand and be ready for the Lord's return.

He also is calling for a media fast for forty days. Well, we know all about that from FA days, don't we? Not too hard to turn off the TV when you've already given it up! His desire is that we use the time we would have spent viewing or listening to the media to pray instead.

There are two things that I really appreciate about this pastor --he is humble and he is a prayer warrior. I think God can do something with a humble man of prayer, don't you?

Subject: Re: When you choose a church...
Posted by [jisamazed](#) on Sat, 20 Jun 2009 14:05:19 GMT
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Glad to hear about the pastor and media fast, Abiding. Media fasts can be highly effective. We live in such an electronic society that we often live in a virtual reality that is removed from sensing the

Lord's work and presence. It is kind of like the way that city lights made the light of the moon and stars to seem dim and fuzzy. When we go out into the country where there are no lights for miles, the moon and stars look much more clear and vivid, and we can see so many more stars. (Can you tell I'm a city boy?)

When we do a media fast it is like going out to the country. We get rid of the interference and can see the Lord more clearly. Or, to use another metaphor, we stop the white noise so we can hear him more clearly. Of course, for me that includes staying off the computer during that time, including OO. Even "good" electronic media can be white noise sometimes.

May we all pray always, that we might be counted worthy to escape the things that will come to pass, and to stand before the son of man with a pure conscience.
