

## 4 Steps to Finding a Great Church Home

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In the past year, we have witnessed and experienced changes in this world that have been unprecedented in our lifetime. These widespread changes have affected many of us in many different ways.

With many local churches forced to close their doors for a period of time, many of these chose to go virtual in order to keep in touch with their congregants. Doing so has made the gospel's online presence more visible than ever before. And while many restrictions have slowly been lifted, and churches in some places have begun to return to a more normal seating capacity, many of these churches, which were not streaming online prior to COVID-19, have opted to maintain an online presence. Once again, for the sake of the gospel, this is a good thing — if it is the gospel that is being preached.

But there are yet those who may have been, prior to this crisis, in the midst of deciding whether their current church was the church for them. For these individuals, much time has been spent during these months in prayer. And as churches re-open, they are faced with a choice: do they continue in the church where they are currently, or do they move on?



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## Why Look for a New Church?

The reasons why people move on to other churches are varied. For some, it's a matter of travel; or a move to another state may require it. For others, it's due to having been offended. This is something that can and should be rectified, before the drastic measure of leaving altogether takes place. This is due to the fact that God desires [reconciliation](#) — especially among the saints.

“If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other” ([Galatians 5:15](#)).

Contrary to what many believe, the mark of a true child of God, as seen through the eyes of the world, has nothing to do with how much time we spend in God's house, or how much we shout, or sing, or even pray. This is what Jesus said:

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” ([John 13:35](#)). While there are many other reasons why people opt to remove themselves from a particular congregation, the most valid reason lies in a church's *doctrine*; i.e. what they believe. For this reason, there must be [discernment](#). It must be understood that *no church* is perfect.

The choice as to which church you attend should not lie in how close it is to where you live; or that your friends and family attend there; or even because you like the pastor's style. What is most important is what leadership is saying, and are you being fed? And if the number one goal of the Christian life is to be like Jesus (which it is), then you and I need to be a part of a congregation that “minds” several things. I believe that there are at least four essential questions to ask when searching for a good church — and the right one for you.



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### 1. Is the Church Cross-minded?

What is a Cross-minded church? This is a church that preaches and teaches first and foremost, *Jesus Christ, and Him crucified*. It was the great apostle Paul who boldly said:

“For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” ([1 Corinthians 2:2](#)).

This does not mean that they preach nothing else — but it does mean that the gospel message is at the *core* of all that they do. Whatever ministries a church may offer – from the men’s and women’s ministries to the usher’s ministry, and every other ministry in between – the gospel is to be the impetus behind it.

Since Christ is our life ([Colossians 3:4](#)), then Christ should also be the center of a church’s life. Nowadays it is most unfortunate that while many churches *say* that they believe the gospel, by their actions they do not. Churches which no longer preach the cross because it’s too “bloody,” or teach the cross because it may offend, or even sing about the cross because it’s “outdated,” no longer qualify as churches. They have forgotten Paul’s words:

“For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel — not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” ([1 Corinthians 1:17-18](#)).

“But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” ([1 Corinthians 1:23-24](#)).

With these words Paul reminds us of the power of the gospel. How can a church be said to be truly alive when it has forgotten the source of its Life?



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## 2. Is the Church Word-minded?

A Word-minded church believes unquestioningly that the [Bible](#), in its entirety, is the inspired and inerrant Word of God. If the Bible is not believed, or if its words are somehow re-interpreted to reflect a changing society, or simply looked upon as a book written by gifted men, then this is a church to be avoided.

If you hear comments from leadership like, “the Bible only *contains* the Word of God,” or, “I’m not sure if I agree with the apostle Paul on a particular point,” then you should run! When a church tells you who they are, believe them.

“All [Scripture](#) is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)).

A church that does not stand upon these words is a church that is ripe for further deception. A church that questions the Bible’s validity has already denied its stability. This church will try and merge psychology, or some other worldly system, with Scripture. It must be remembered that Scripture is divine — psychology and man-made systems are not.

“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ” ([Colossians 2:8](#)).

This statement is not meant to denigrate an entire livelihood (speaking of psychology), but simply meant to underscore the fact that it is a band-aid at best; Christ alone is the cure.

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” ([Hebrews 4:12](#)).

If a church believes and teaches this, then they will have no need to fall back on or introduce anything else; the Word of God is sufficient for all our needs.



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### 3. Is the Church Prayer-minded?

Next, if one is searching for a good church, is it prayer-minded? The absolute importance of a praying church cannot be overemphasized. Prayer is a deliberate, powerful resource given to us that we may touch God, enter into His presence, and receive that which we need from Him. When engage in prayer corporately, it is the cord that keeps a church aligned with the mind of God.

If a church replaces times of prayer with programs and entertainment, they run the risk of missing His will. Corporate prayer is also necessary so that the church may gather for intercessory prayer. We read this powerful scene from the early church:

“So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him” ([Acts 12:5](#)).

Unless a church embraces prayer as a necessary part of its life, then that church is in danger of becoming a *soft target*, meaning that it makes itself susceptible to attacks from the enemy. These attacks will arise mainly from within. Love makes the church one; prayer keeps it as one.

### 4. Is the Church Soul-minded?

Simply put, when a church is soul-minded, it has a burden for the lost. When churches begin placing their attention on political and social issues primarily, they have forgotten the mission of Christ in His earthly ministry. We cite Jesus’ own words:

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” ([Luke 19:10](#)).

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free” ([Luke 4:18](#)).

What has changed? Nothing, except for the fact that Christ is no longer here in the flesh. In His physical absence, He has sent us His Spirit, and given us a command that is still in effect:

“Therefore [go and make disciples](#) of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the [Holy Spirit](#), and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)).

Christ’s mission on earth was not political or social; He did not come to tear down the Roman Empire, or to free His people from the yoke of Roman rule. Christ’s mission on earth

was to free people from spiritual bondage to sin, and His mission should be the Church's mission on earth. The local church must fall in line and reach out to those in need of the Savior. In a very real sense, the local church is a "soul-saving station;" a place where anyone can come and hear the life-changing message of the gospel.

As stated previously, no church is perfect. However, we believe these are the marks of a good church. You must be in prayer concerning what church to attend — *because it matters*. These four qualities are meant guide you and help you along the way. In the end, be submissive to the Spirit; He will never lead you astray.

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