

I've Got To Leave This Church!



THAT'S IT. I'VE HAD IT!

There may come a time for all of us, when we feel that it's time to leave the church we're in. That's okay, as long as it's God's will. But often, it's only a person's frustration coming out.

Frustration, or anger, in any form, and in any degree, are never good reasons to leave a church. Ephesians 4:26 says: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Well, if we're not to let the sun go down on our wrath, what are we to do with it?

Jesus taught us that we are to forgive each other for any and all offenses. Even if the offense is committed over, and over, and over again (Matthew 18:22). Otherwise, how can we expect God to forgive us (Matthew 6:14-15)? You know something? Pastors, elders, deacons, Sunday school teachers, and even the lady who wears the funny hats and always has to tell you her opinion on everything are all included in our

requirement to forgive.

Every pastor will do something to upset you sometime, including the one you have now. If he doesn't, you can pretty much be guaranteed that he's upsetting God, instead of you. When a pastor preaches the word of God the way it's supposed to be preached, it will cause change in people's lives, and that usually makes someone upset.

So, what do you do when your pastor upsets you? That's easy...forgive him. Plain and simple. No if's, and's or but's, just do it.

Afterwards, if you have truly forgiven, and feel that there is some way he is in error, pray for him. Pastors, and other ministers need more prayer than the average Christian. Why? Because they are under more attack than the average Christian, that's why. If we don't take time to pray for our Christian leaders, then we are at fault if they fall.

Okay, so you've forgiven the pastor, and now you're praying for him. That's the end of it, right? What? You think you still need to confront him on it? Then do it. Pastors aren't perfect. In fact, being a pastor doesn't necessarily mean a man of God is spiritually mature. All it means is that God has gifted the Body of Christ with that man, in that office. So, talk to him. That's right, to him. Not to someone else about him, only to him. Talking to anyone else about the perceived problem is gossip. Don't do it! Just talk to the pastor...in love...in a spirit of unity...as a brother in the Lord.

There's only one time that it is appropriate to leave a church, and go to another one. That's when God tells you to.

I'M NOT GETTING WHAT I NEED HERE

This is probably one of the most common excuses people give for leaving a church. It might take on different forms, but one way or another, people are looking for something they aren't getting. Either the pastor isn't preaching a "deep" enough message, or their isn't an exciting youth group for the teens, or the Sunday school isn't equipped with the latest in puppets and drama, or the men's group doesn't go to the ball game together. So what?

Whoever said that the church had to supply all this stuff anyway? According to Acts 2:42, there are supposed to be four things going on in the church, it says: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Nowhere in there does it say children's church, men's fellowship, youth group, or camping trips. All it says is:

- ✓ Apostle's doctrine - teaching and preaching the word.
- ✓ Fellowship - spending time learning about our brothers and sisters in the Lord.
- ✓ Breaking of Bread - partaking of the Lord's covenant meal together.
- ✓ Prayer - joining together to thank and petition God.

Now, that doesn't mean that those other things are all bad. In fact, there is a place in the Body of Christ for each and every one of them. But, they aren't the church's responsibility. If you want them, then ask God how you should go about doing them. Obviously you're the one

with the vision for it, so you're the one to do it.

The pastor is not responsible for these things. In fact, he is specifically not responsible for them. His job description is contained in Ephesians 4:11-13. It says that the five fold ministry is given (by God) "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry..." His job is to train you to do those areas of ministry. Then, God can work through you to accomplish those other things that the pastor doesn't have the time, or the anointing to accomplish.

Yeah, but, the pastor isn't feeding me.

I've heard that one before too. In fact, I've probably even said it myself sometime. But, where in the Bible does it call the church a feeding trough?

Let's just take a moment here, and apply a little logic to the situation. In the natural, who are the only people that you have to feed? Babies, right? You can't even add children to this statement, because even young children can get themselves something to eat, even if it's only a bowl of breakfast cereal. So, when you complain about the pastor not feeding you, you're admitting to being a spiritual baby. One who is incapable of feeding themselves, even when it's all laid out for them in the Bible.

God doesn't necessarily put you in a church for what you can get there. Often, He will put you there for what you can give of yourself there. This is more apparent the more mature you become in the Lord. The author of Hebrews said that there should come a time in your spiritual life, where you are feeding others, not

asking to be fed (Hebrews 5:12).

WHEN SHOULD I LEAVE THE CHURCH?

If we can't leave a church because of being upset, and we can't leave because we're not getting something we need, when can we leave the church?

There's only one time that it is appropriate to leave a church, and go to another one. That's when God tells you to. Even leaving because of a job isn't an acceptable reason, unless God tells you that that's the job for you. Otherwise, you might be going after a job that prevents you from having the fellowship you need to stay spiritually healthy.

When we are seeking God's guidance for our lives, He is more than willing to provide it. That way, we are only making the moves that God wants us to.

HOW SHOULD I LEAVE THE CHURCH?

Okay, so you think God wants you to leave the church you're in, now what do you do. There are four basic steps to take before leaving any church. By following these steps, you will avoid bringing reproach to yourself, your church, and to Jesus' name.

1. **Pray, pray, pray.** Make sure that you have God's will and direction. Remember, God's direction is the only reason to leave a church. So, be sure that God has told you, and not that you're trying to put God's name on your own desires. If you're married, pray until you're in agreement. Don't worry about taking too long. Many more people get in trouble for going

ahead of God's timing than waiting too long. If God really wants you to move, he'll make it happen.

2. **Search the word.** You should have a scriptural basis for anything that you do, especially if it concerns anything spiritual. God never contradicts His Word. So, find out what God's word says about your leaving. You should be able to point to specific scriptures for your actions, not ones like "what you are to do, do it quickly" (John 13:27). Remember to use the scripture in context.

There are four basic steps to take before leaving any church.

3. **Know where you're going.** God doesn't take people out of things, he sends them into new things. If you don't know where God's sending you, it isn't time. Wait until you have a destination. Even Abraham left Haran with a destination of "a land that I will shew thee" (Genesis 12:1).

4. **Talk with your pastor.** Pastors are gifted by God with a heart for His people. When you leave a church without talking to the pastor, you are not only hurting him, but losing out on the blessing that he can impart to you. If it is truly God's best for your to leave, let your pastor confirm it. Allow him the opportunity to pray about it, and receive whatever he says. This allows him to release you in prayer, before the congregation, instead of having to make excuses for you afterwards.

There it is; four simple steps. If you follow these, God is much more able to bless the move you are trying to make. Otherwise, all you are doing is creating strife and division, both of which are abominations to the Lord.

I've Got to Leave This Church!



Maranatha Life
P.O. Box 1206
Donna, TX 78537

e-mail: Rich@MaranathaLife.com
www.MaranathaLife.com

by
Rich Murphy