

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Theme: Church

No Church Is Perfect!

Bill Brinkworth

Every church has good and bad members. The church that John was writing to in III John had several of both categories, I am sure. However, the apostle wrote of three members in his letter.

Two of the members were good representations of what a Christian should be. Gaius was the “well-beloved” (III John 1). He was most likely a friendly sort that many loved. Many reports from the church told John how Gaius was a blessing in the church family (III John 3, 6) and how he attended to other Christians' needs (III John 5). His care and concern for the brethren were evident that he truly loved the church members.

Another blessing in the church was Demetrius. He also had good things said about him (III John 12). Those two were an encouragement to the apostle's heart. It is always good and encouraging to hear how people get saved, get their hearts and lives changed by the Holy Spirit's work, and go on to do much for the cause of Christ and the people of God.

People like those two encourage others by their proof of love for the family of God. They are sometimes part of the reason many stay faithful in church. They make others feel welcomed and make it a friendly atmosphere.

However, even if we are saved, we still have sinful flesh to contend with, and there will often be “stinkers” in every church. In this church in III John, there was one. His name was Diotrephes.

Diotrephes had a terrible testimony in the eyes of others. Instead of showing the spirit of meekness the other two good members showed, that man exhibited improper Christian behavior. He was known for always wanting recognition (III John 9). I can just imagine he was one of those that usually had something to say. He was one that got much of the attention and glory. He even refused to accept John the Apostle and any missionaries John sent to the church (III John 10). This discontented man did all he could to talk poorly of John and his work. Diotrephes even had people kicked out of the church that showed charity to anyone John sent to the ministry.

This type of person ruins the testimony of any church. When a human tries to get the glory, which Diotrephes was attempting to receive, the Holy Spirit is grieved. Because of their hurtful, unchristlike demeanor, the work for Christ can come to a screeching halt. That is one reason many once-thriving churches are now spiritually dead and doing little for the cause of Christ. Unfortunately, people like that often become an excuse for many to leave a church.

In every ministry, there are two types of attendees and members. The good workers are the light in this dark world. They make the church a Christian family. The evil (III John 11) should be ignored and not be why anyone leaves a church. If one does go because of a “Diotrephes,” one can be assured that the Holy Spirit is not involved in the decision. If you have one or more “Diotrephes” in your church, do not leave. Get your eyes and ears off them, and keep your focus on the Saviour. He will never let you down, and He is the reason you should be attending anyway!

“If you see the obstacles, your eyes are off the Saviour.” — *Author Unknown*

Home for Outcasts

C. H. Spurgeon

One, who was just saved, talked of her sin. She moaned, “Yet, sir, I am an outcast.”

That word pierced my heart like a dagger. I said to her, “Yes, you may have been, but the church of Christ was made on purpose to be a home for outcasts. It is a new household for you, new brothers and sisters for you, and it holds a new future for you. You are one of the solitary ones whom the Lord, in His infinite wisdom, has set in His family.”

“If we ever found a perfect church, we would have to leave because we would make it imperfect!”

But I Can't Go to Church Now

Bill Brinkworth

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed normal life all around the world. It has forced many to be wary of the spread of the disease.

In many areas, church buildings have limited attendance because of the outbreaks of the virus. Many have even closed their doors until the pandemic lessens.

But the church house is not the church! The real church is those that are born-again into the family of God. Those members of the body of Christ still need to be fed and encouraged. Times may have changed, but the believer's needs have not.

Instead of lamenting, "I'm all alone. I can't see my friends at church," or "Because I can't go to church, I'm not being fed spiritually anymore," do something about it! Maybe it is time you try to meet the still-existent needs of others. Minister to others rather than waiting for others to care for you!

- Spiritually feed yourself, if you are not doing it already. Daily read your Bible. Study the Word of God. Increase your prayer life. If your church is broadcasting on the internet or radio, do not miss a service.

I have heard of one woman who does not have the

internet to listen to her church services. Filling the need, another church member, who can hear the internet broadcast of her church, plays it over the phone so the other can hear the services.

- Minister to others. If you cannot visit them, call members on the phone, send cards, or write letters. Avoid gossip and complaining, but purpose to uplift those you contact. For some, a phone call could include prayer-time or sharing a blessing found in the Scriptures.

Do not just call or write to your close friends. New members, widows, sick, your pastor, and the lonely need to be encouraged and not forgotten. They may not be able to go to the church building, but you can bring “church” to them!

This difficult isolation can be a growing time rather than a dying-church time. It will be a flourishing time if all will be more concerned about ministering to others rather than just letting someone minister to them. It is still a time to work, and not to sit!

Do not wait for someone to meet your spiritual needs. Get your mind off yourself and think of and minister to others. Survival of the church is up to each one of us. It is time for all Christians to get involved in the work of Christ and make a difference.

Reasons for Going

Bill Brinkworth

There are two categories of reasons for attending church: spiritual and unspiritual reasons. Here are some reasons for attendance that fall under those divisions:

Spiritual:

- “The Word of God is taught, believed, and practiced there.”
- “I grow spiritually at that church.”
- “The Holy Spirit convicts my heart through preaching.”
- “It is where unsaved people can come and get saved!”
- “The church is a place where I can serve God.”
- “The music glorifies and honors God.”
- “There are good spiritual influences there.”
- “It is a good place for my family to learn more about spiritual things.”
- “It is where God wants me.”

Unspiritual:

- “I feel good when I listen to preaching and don’t feel guilty about anything.”
- “It’s a place to learn about God, but they’re not fanatical about it.”
- “It is a very modern church. They use the newest bibles, music, and popular books.”
- “It’s a good place to get clients for my business.”
- “Going there will make me look like a Christian, and people will trust me more in my business.”
- “Going there eases my conscience, and I feel like I am doing something spiritual.”

- “I can give money to them and count it as a tax write-off.”
- “It’s not a strict church. I can do anything I want, and no one says anything.”
- “It is the most popular church in the area.”
- “The services are always entertaining.”
- “It’s a good place to meet girls.”
- “The music is almost the same as I listen to at home, just a few of the words are different.”

Are your reasons for attending church “spiritual” or “unspiritual”?

“When the prayer house becomes a playhouse, and when we become more interested in recreation than in re-creation, then the church becomes a house of merchandise.” — *Vance Havner*

There May be Discouragement

Author Unknown

Like so many Christians today, Paul faced some opposition from other Christians. Some in the churches he spoke at questioned his apostleship, and others accused him of walking in the flesh (II Corinthians 10:2). No matter the accusation, Paul chose not to fight back. He decided not to fight those who were carnal with his carnal retorts. He let his works for the Lord speak for themselves and let the Lord do the rest of the battling (II Corinthians 10:4-8).

Many who attend a church have had someone falsely accuse or suspect them of something or have their feelings hurt at least once. No church is perfect. Although Christians may occupy the ministry, none of them are sinless.

Some members of the church family are more carnal than others. They understand things from a fleshly perspective and not how God sees them (II Corinthians 10:5). To make matters worse, they often voice their opinions about other members. When this is done, someone usually gets hurt.

Too many, unfortunately, get wind of what was said about them and leave the church — never to darken the church doors again. My first thought is usually, “Who would be behind such a move of leaving a church for the wrong reasons — God or Satan?” It would not be of God to disobey his commandment (Hebrews 10:24-25) and not assemble with other believers. Yet, people leave churches often for the wrong reasons.

Sometimes we also have had things said about us by other church family members. The false accusations hurt us deeply, but we remembered that we were not in attendance for them but for God. He wanted us to stay, and we did. It was a hard time, and much

praying was done on our part. However, we never missed a meeting, and we kept at the work the Lord had for us.

Over time, we looked around and noticed our accusers were no longer in attendance. God takes care of his own, but that does not mean that there will not be difficulties.

Paul stayed and did what God told him to do, and God used him greatly. His accusers' names are not even mentioned in the Bible, but Paul is still remembered.

Be a "Paul." Determine in your heart whom you will serve and let the Lord handle the light work!

“Hopefully, you don’t go to church for ‘feelings,’ so don’t leave if they get hurt. You should go to church to be obedient to the Lord!”