

the issue. Those who are members of the church always understand how the visitors should make their choice and those who are visiting always understand how they should be received by the members. Here we see both sides before us. If both the visitor and the church conduct themselves appropriately, God will be pleased.

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AUGUST 21, 2011

What Are People Looking For in a Church? Bill Crews

At this very moment hundreds of thousands of our fellow-Americans are looking for a church (or, as some express it, "a church home"). they are looking (1) because they have recently moved to a new area, (2) because they had drifted and are now ready for a renewal of religious interest in their lives, or (3) because they have become unhappy with "their old church." What are they looking for? What do they hope to find? What do they feel they need?

The Answers

1. Some are looking for a church that is like the former church they were affiliated with, most for no other reason than tradition or custom. They don't want any change from the religion they have become accustomed to.
2. Some are looking for a church (building) that is convenient to where they live, one that is within easy driving distance. They don't want to have to drive very far to get to "the services."
3. Some are looking for a church made up of friendly people who will make them feel welcome and wanted. They don't want one whose members seem cold and formal.
4. Some are looking for a church that will give them a sense of belonging and of importance. They don't want a church whose members just never seem to accept them, who do not give them a sense of self esteem.
5. Some are looking for a big church because they prefer to just blend in with the crowd. They don't want a church that is so small that they can be missed at services and that they have to take some active role.
6. Some are looking for a small church because they want to be able to know all the

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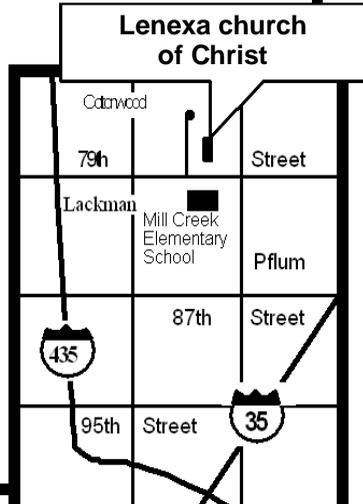
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Evangelist:
Jim Stauffer



MEETING TIMES

Sunday - Bible Classes: 9:30AM
Worship Services 10:20AM & 6:00PM
Wednesday - Bible Classes 7:00PM
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members and because “smaller churches are usually friendlier and more like a family.” They don't want a church that is so big that “you can't tell the members from the visitors.”

7. Some are looking for a church that is engaged in doing a lot of “good works.” They don't want a church that isn't into solving “world problems” and committed to “social reform” and “community improvement.”

8. Some are looking for a church that sponsors a lot of youth activities and family affairs. They aren't interested in a church that doesn't have parties, picnics, dinners, suppers, games, teams, clubs, scout troops, exercise and health programs, classes for hobbies and crafts, etc.

What's Missing In These Answers?

Now, if you will, look back over that list. There is in it not a word about God, or Christ, or the Bible, or the gospel of Christ, or salvation from sin, or soul, or heaven, or eternal life. People need to open their Bibles, and read the New Testament, and find out why Jesus built His church (Matt. 16:18), and find out what a congregation of God's people is supposed to be, and to teach, and to do. Churches existed in the New Testament for the purpose of ministering to the spiritual needs of men, for the purpose of glorifying God, for the purpose of teaching God's word, for the purpose of saving the lost and edifying the saved (Eph. 3:20-21; 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 3:15). When a group of Christians constitutes a church, they do not have to wonder what God wants them to do. The lives they are to live individually, the organizational arrangement they are to have, the doctrine they are to teach, the collective worship they are to engage in, the collective work they are to do are all clearly defined in the New Testament. Some Suggestions!

Permit me to offer some suggestions:

1. Look for a church that respects the sovereignty of God and the authority of Jesus, the Son of God, Rom. 1:20; Matt. 28:20.
2. Look for a church that respects the Bible as the inspired word of God and the gospel of Christ as the power of God unto salvation, 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Rom. 1:16.
3. Look for a church that strives to be like the churches you can read about in the New Testament -- in designation, in worship, in organization, in teaching, in work, Acts 2:42; Col. 3:17; 2 John 9.
4. Look for a church that is concerned about lost souls and eternal destinies, Acts 8:4; I Thess. 1:8.
5. Look for a church that ministers to the spiritual needs of men, that is more concerned about giving men what they need than about giving men what they want, Eph. 4:12; Acts 20:20, 27.

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(Please apply the principles of this article to us at Lenexa. Jim Stauffer)

Would You Treat Your Guests Like This?

Imagine this, if you can: On a cold, rainy morning some guests arrive at your home. Upon their arrival, you barely even notice their presence. Finally, you do stop from what you are doing long enough to give a quick look in their direction and maybe a nod or a grunt that is intended as a "hello." You ask them to park their car some distance from the house, not in the driveway, but down the street a couple of blocks away so that you and your family will not be inconvenienced as you come and go. After all, you need the closest and best access to the door. Once inside, the visitors find that you and your family have occupied all the best seats. You don't get up or move to accommodate them. They look around nervously for a place to sit, and you do nothing to help them. After some time, they crowd into a couple of folding chairs located along a far wall of the family room. You never pay any special attention to them as you continue to watch your program on the TV. At the end of an hour, they get up to leave. Again, you don't speak to them. They make the long walk to their car - in the rain - and drive away.

Two questions: Will these guests feel like you were glad that they came? Will they ever attempt to visit you again?

We know you would never treat your guests at home this way, but here is the application: Some visitors arrive at our worship assembly. Upon their arrival we barely notice their presence. Perhaps we nod or grunt a "hello" in their direction. We've already expected them to park far away from the door, because our own members have occupied the nearest parking spaces for their own convenience. When they enter the meeting room, they find that all the best seats have been occupied. Only a few seats way up near the front are available. No one gets up or offers them any assistance in locating a place to sit. At the end of the worship hour, everyone is busy with their own circle of friends, and no one speaks to them. They make the long walk - in the rain - to their car and drive away.

Two questions: Will these visitors believe that we are glad they came? Will they ever think about visiting again?

Christians, think! We need and want visitors to attend our assemblies. If we don't give them a true and genuine welcome, they will not return. We need the cooperation of every member - giving up the best parking spaces, surrendering the preferred seats, and warmly greeting the visitors. This is more than just a good idea. God actually holds us accountable for how well we greet people who come into our assemblies (read James 2:1-10). Can we count on you to do your part?

- by Greg Gwin

I have very carefully selected these articles to give instruction to both sides of