

## **HOW CAN I BE SURE I'M IN THE CHURCH WHERE THE LORD WANTS ME TO BE?**

**To answer this question...**

### **I. WE NEED TO DISCERN WHAT KIND OF CHURCH THE LORD WANT US IN**

#### **A. The Lord wants us in a church where the truth is preached and taught**

Not every church preaches and teaches the truth. Some preach that salvation is obtained through good works. Some preach that baptism is the thing that saves. Some preach that a person must keep certain sacraments in order to be saved. Such errors were clearly denounced by the apostle Paul when the churches of Galatia began to teach false doctrine (Gal. 1:8,9).

Some churches have little or no Biblical standards or conduct for those who belong. As a result members of the church drink, dance, and engage in all kinds of immoral practices. Some even tolerate homosexuality as an acceptable life style and have ordained homosexuals into the ministry. Such conduct is dishonoring to the Lord and the Scriptures make it plain that a church should deal with sinful conduct which would hurt the testimony of that church and bring reproach upon the Lord (I Cor. 5:1-8).

Not every church is involved in a missionary program to carry out the great commission which the Lord Jesus gave to the church (Matt. 28:19,20).

Someone has said a good church which preaches the truth is characterized by 5 s's. It will preach on salvation, sin, soul-winning, separation and the Second Coming.

There is a certain principle which is also operative in the ministry of any church - "when people believe right they will live right." Conversely when people don't live right it is because they don't believe right. It follows then that false teachings is the precursor of sinful living.

#### **B. The Lord wants us involved in the ministry of a local church**

This is the pattern which is set forth in the N.T. Those who were saved in Antioch joined the church of Antioch. Those who were saved in Ephesus joined the church at Ephesus. They didn't go to church services in the next town.

The pattern set forth in the N.T. was to start new churches in areas where there were no churches. This is what we find as Paul and others spread the

gospel on their missionary journeys (Acts 11:19-23; 15:36).

## **II. WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS WHEN WE'RE WHERE THE LORD WANTS US TO BE**

A. When we're where the Lord wants us to be He will give us a satisfaction in our souls.

Most people have been in a place where they felt they just didn't belong. There was an uneasiness, an unrest and an uncomfortable feeling. Sometimes it comes across as feeling inferior or unwelcomed by others.

An illustration of knowing we're where the Lord wants us to be is seen in a pastor's going to a new church. It may be in podunk hollow but God will give him a satisfaction in his soul. This is no doubt what the apostle Paul and others experienced in the different churches where they served (Acts 16:6-10; Phil. 2:19,20).

B. When we're where the Lord wants us to be He will give us a bonding with other believers.

This is what we find demonstrated in the New Testament as Paul and others were led to serve in respective churches (Acts 9:26-28; 20:17-38).

Just as the disciples took Paul in and they served the Lord together this is what one finds when he is where the Lord wants him to be. He will be taken in by others and begin a spiritual bonding which is very special and very precious in this life. To fellowship with them will be a great joy and to know their burdens will be your burdens as well.

## **III. WE NEED TO BE AWARE OF WHAT'S INVOLVED AND WHAT'S REQUIRED IN GETTING ALONG IN GOD'S FAMILY**

A. Getting along in God's family involves an understanding of human nature.

Someone has said -"If you ever find the perfect church, don't you join it, because you'll ruin it if you do."

What this means is that we are all plagued with a sin nature and we are going to say or do things that oftentimes hurt or offend others.

Oftentimes people expect perfection in others and when they don't find it they use that for an excuse to leave a church and oftentimes stay out of church.

But notice if a man didn't like the food at one restaurant would he stop eating altogether? I think not.

B. Getting along in God's family requires dealing with situations in a God-prescribed manner.

The apostle Paul gave instructions for certain ones in various churches to be reconciled. These involved dealing with situations in a God-prescribed manner. They were to love one another, forgive one another, and to learn to get along for the sake of the Lord's work (Eph. 4:32; I Jn. 4:7; I Pet. 2:1; Phil. 2:12-16; Rom. 15:1-3).

Just like members in a family must learn as they grow up to share, to help, to love, and to forgive so must those in God's family.

Oftentimes people are not willing to do what God prescribes and they leave a church out of fellowship and without just cause. But God wants us to learn to apply spiritual principles and settle issues one with another.

Someone has well-said there are only two justifiable reasons for leaving a church - doctrinal error and a geographical move out of the area.

How can one be sure he is in the church where the Lord wants him to be? If he is in a local church where the truth is preached and taught and where he can be actively involved in the ministry of that church then he can be sure he is in the right church to serve the Lord.