

REASONS WHY PEOPLE ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THE CHURCH

The following list of reasons why church members are dissatisfied with the church was selected from Chuck Lawless's presentation on reasons people leave the church. (1)

No connectedness. There may be lonely church members, regardless of whether they're lonely because the church is unfriendly or because the church does not have a balanced program for all members. Elderly parishioners often have this attitude when attention is centered on the children and youth programs. The reverse is also true when there is poor children's or adolescent programming.

Perceived irrelevance. Members who think the preaching and teaching do not speak to the reality of their day-to-day lives will often become dissatisfied.

Theological and non-theological differences. Sometimes differences are over actual theological beliefs, sometimes it is over moral right and wrong, and sometimes over cultural differences, such as attire and song selections (favorite hymns) or musical performance (too many loud guitars).

Authoritarian leadership. Some leaders do not permit opposing views and expect everyone to follow in line. Dogmatic or dictatorial leadership does not work effectively in a church where members can easily leave the organization. Neither does micromanagement of selected departmental leaders, elders, deaconesses, deacons, or employees such as office staff, janitors, or maintenance personnel.

Neglected pastoral care. Church members desire and expect a pastor to be available in time of personal tragedy or need. Personal counseling should always be confidential and never shared with anyone. Pastors are not psychologists, and should refer parishioners to licensed personnel after three or four fifty minute sessions when there are complicated issues.

Exclusion instead of inclusion. There can be cliques within the church organization; members react negatively to favoritism, nepotism, or self-styled elitism. Anytime you have a select group that makes the decisions at the expense of the congregation and then expect others to do the work you have major problems.

Unfulfilled expectations. When reasonable requests go unattended for months, which could include anything from clean bathrooms to a request for personal contact, then members become dissatisfied.

(1) Lawless, C. 12 Reasons People Leave a Church. <http://chucklawless.com>2018/01>.

Submitted by: Dr. Dale Johnson