

How to Find a Good Church

Almost 25 questions that will save you a lot of Sundays

Looking for a good church? Join the club. Church-shopping can be a long and painful process. To shorten your search, call the pastor of the church before you visit and ask the following questions. This might save you a lot of Sundays.

1. What is man's biggest problem, sin or self esteem?

Seeker sensitive and felt-needs churches focus on man's hurts and problems. The Bible says that man's biggest problem is sin.

2. What must a man do to inherit eternal life?

Repent and trust is the Biblical answer. If the word "repent" is never used, say, "Thank you."

3. How do you deliver the salvation message?

Ask the pastor to describe specifically what he says. Does he encourage people to simply say a prayer? Does he tell people to ask Jesus into their hearts?

The salvation message should include: God's holiness, man's sinfulness, God's response (hell), God's kindness (Jesus on a cross), man's response (repentance and faith).

4. How hard is it to become a Christian?

The "formula" is simple, doing it is not. It is not easy to believe.

5. How often do you talk about sin, righteousness and judgment?

Balance is key. This should not be the only emphasis, but it should be a regular emphasis.

6. How seeker sensitive is your church?

It is o.k. for a church to be "seeker aware" but seeker sensitive means that they lean toward seekers and not the saved.

7. Who do you do church for, seekers or members?

"Both" is not acceptable. Church should be done for members and the unsaved are welcome to attend.

8. Do you dumb down your sermons?

If he says yes, he is probably not trying to wean his members from milk to meat. Answers like, "We try to make our sermons accessible to everyone" are sermons that are not meaty.

9. What is your mixture of topical vs. expository preaching?

Topical preaching is fine, but if a pastor never or rarely preaches expositionally (verse by verse), then you are going to be learning from the pastor and not God's Word.

10. Do your sermons emphasize theology or are they just relevant?

Everyone should say their sermons are relevant, what you are looking for is if they teach theology.

11. Describe your youth programs.

If fun and games is the major (and usually first) emphasis, you have a youth program that is trying to compete with MTV.

12. Describe your evangelism programs.

Don't just accept, "We have an evangelism committee." Dig. Are they serious about saving souls?

13. What church growth model do you follow?

Hopefully they don't have one. Churches should be reaching out to the lost, but churches that are plugged into new church growth models tend to follow man's modern ideas rather than the Bible.

14. How much do you give to missions and the hungry?

Again, this reveals the heart of the church. While most churches give to missions, many never consider the poor.

15. Do you believe the Bible contains no errors or contradictions?

No equivocation allowed here.

16. Do you believe in a literal 6 day creation?

Jesus did (Matt.19:4).

17. Do you believe in a literal hell and eternal punishment?

Jesus did (Matt.25).

19. When you distribute the Lord's Supper, do you emphasize the need to examine yourself?

Paul did (I Cor.11:27-32)

20. Can a person who is living in a persistent lifestyle of sin inherit eternal life?

Sinners can certainly be forgiven, but practicing sinners cannot inherit eternal life (I John3:8,9).

21. Does your church exercise church discipline?

Paul said we should (I Cor.5).

22. Do Sunday school teachers, nursery, and youth volunteers fill out an application to answer questions about their core beliefs and salvation, or are all volunteers accepted because of a lack of volunteers?

23. What are the essentials of the faith?

Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Salvation through faith alone, the inerrancy of Scripture.

24. Do you have a cross in your sanctuary?

Many remove it because they fear it will turn off seekers. They should glory in the cross.