

Church is for the Church

November 8, 2018

"In recent years a new movement within the evangelical church has come into vogue, commonly referred to as 'seeker sensitive.' Generally, this movement has seen a great deal of growth. Many 'seeker' churches are now mega-churches with well-known pastors who are riding a wave of popularity in the evangelical world. The seeker-sensitive movement claims millions of conversions, commands vast resources, continues to gain popularity, and seems to be attracting millions of unchurched people into its fold."

"So, what is this movement all about? Where does it come from? And, most importantly, is it biblical? Basically, the seeker-sensitive church tries to reach out to the unsaved person by making the church experience as comfortable, inviting, and non-threatening to him as possible. The hope is that the person will believe in the gospel. The idea behind the concept is to get as many unsaved people through the door as possible, and the church leadership are willing to use nearly any means to accomplish that goal. Theatrics and musical entertainment are the norm in the church service to keep the unsaved person from getting bored as he does with traditional churches. State-of-the-art technology in lighting and sound are common components of the seeker-sensitive churches, especially the larger ones."

—GotQuestions.org, "Should a Church be Seeker Sensitive?"

"In this method the church attempts to evangelize the community by attracting people to its buildings, services, events, or programs. The idea behind this approach is that you offer people what they want or enjoy and they come to your church."

—The Keystone Project, keystoneproject.org

"Shortly after my daughter started training for her job at Disneyland, she noticed it attracts such a diversity of people – culturally, racially, and even in terms of sexual orientation – because 'Disney makes everyone feel accepted.' I couldn't help but blurt out 'that's what the church should be – the place where everyone wants to be because they feel loved and accepted...' Before I could finish my sentence, she finished it for me. '... but the church is often the last place they want to be because they fear they will be judged.' Sadly, Dana is right."

—5 Lessons the Church Can Learn from Disney, 3 - Make It A Safe Place For Everyone

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 NASB

3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy [KJV - falling away / ESV - rebellion] comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

Jude 1:3-4 ESV

3 Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

4 For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Is the church service for believers or unbelievers?

And if the church service is for unbelievers, should the message and the exercise of our faith be altered to be appealing and non-offensive to the unbeliever?

1. The natural gathering and assembly of a congregation is the visible expression of the invisible union and communion as the Body of Christ, the habitation and temple of God. The unbeliever has no part in that relationship.

1 Corinthians 12:12-18 ESV

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body.

16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body.

17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?

18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

Ephesians 2:20-22 ESV

20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

1 Peter 2:5 ESV

5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

2. The ministry and function of the church assembly is supernatural - all by the initiation and unction of the Holy Spirit. Again, the unbeliever has no part in that.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 ESV

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;

5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;

6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

8 For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,
10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.
11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

Acts 8:18-24 ESV

18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money,
19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."
20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!
21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.
22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you.
23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity."
24 And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

3. The purity of the individual lives and corporate gathering has a direct bearing on the Holy Spirit's presence and interaction in that gathering.

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 ESV

6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?
7 Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.
8 Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

2 Timothy 2:19 ESV

19 But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 ESV

14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?
15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?
16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."
17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,
18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

4. **Every church assembly lives and grows by God's schedule, God's agenda, God's methods - not by marketing strategies contrived by man.**

Acts 2:46-47 ESV

46 **And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,**
47 **praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.**

Acts 2:5-13 ESV

5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language.

7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?"

8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?

9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians--we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

12 And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

13 But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

- *The rapid growth of the Church was not the result of human strategy or man's efforts.*
- *The growth came from God alone. It was supernatural, nothing that man could have imagined, initiated, contrived or controlled.*

Acts 5:11-14 ESV

11 **And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things** [the death of Ananias and Sapphira].

12 **Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico.**

13 **None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem.**

14 **And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.**

Are unbelievers welcomed in church? Always!

1 Corinthians 14:23-25 ESV

23 **If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds?**

24 **But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all,**

25 **the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.**