

## When is it right to leave a church?

A decision to leave a church is a serious matter that should only be made with much prayer. Many times people change churches like they change vehicles. When their current church begins to seem old, or another one looks fresh and intriguing, they change it up. This is unfortunate. Also, leaving a church because you have had your feelings hurt is not a good reason – especially if you have not been obedient to the Lord in properly addressing the offense (Matt 18:15-17). Additionally, leaving a church because of matters of personal preference is not a good reason. We have been called to lay down our lives and our preferences for our brethren (1 Jn 3:16; Matt 5:23-24; Rom 14, etc.)

However, with that being stated, there are times when it is appropriate to leave a church and join in Christian fellowship and service with another body of believers. Some examples of when this would be appropriate are:

- (1) *When heresy on a cardinal truth (i.e. the Gospel) is being taught by church leadership.* (Galatians 1:6-9)
- (2) *When church leadership tolerates false teaching among those who have been placed in visible teaching roles within the church* (Rom 16:17; Tit 1:9-13)
- (3) *When open, blatant sin and unholy living is tolerated within the church and the leadership disregards Scriptural admonitions to enact church discipline.* (1 Cor 5)
- (4) *When you are not being properly fed spiritually.* While you have a personal responsibility to feed on the Word of God (2 Tim 2:15), you also have a responsibility to position your family within a church that takes the teaching of God's Word very seriously. (1 Tim 3:2, 15; 1 Pet 5:1-4)
- (5) *When the church persistently resists being actively and personally involved in fulfilling the Great Commission* (Matt 28:18-20). This is the functional purpose of the body of Christ. To disregard this function is to concede to immobility and thus dishonor the Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Tim 3:5)
- (6) *When God directs you to another place.* There may come a time when God, for His glory and the building up of His kingdom, will direct you to another place of service. In the Scriptures we find many examples of this such as Barnabas (Acts 11:22-26) and Silas (Acts 15:22-34).

The above are not the only times when it may be appropriate to leave a church. Regardless of the circumstance, you should be sure to make such a decision with much prayer. Seek to always ensure that your motives are in line with seeking God's glory. If you are prayerful and this is your motive, you will come to make the right decision.