

CHURCHES IN THE BIBLE



Words to Find:
 Antioch
 Babylon
 Berea
 Colosse
 Corinth
 Ephesus
 Galatia
 Jerusalem
 Laodicea
 Pergamos
 Philadelphia
 Philippi
 Rome
 Sardis
 Smyrna
 Thessalonica
 Thyatira
 Troas

Additions by restoration: 0
Additions by transfer of letter: 0
Losses by withdrawal of fellowship: 0
Losses by death: 0

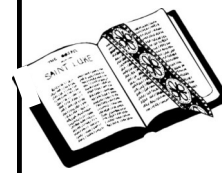
The report was closed with:
 “Brethren, we are holding our own! Pray for us!”

Spiritually Dead, but Didn't Know It!

Edited from an article by W. B. Knight

An annual church report was once given to its members. It read:
Additions to church during the year by profession of faith: 0

The Bible View



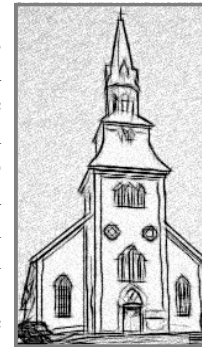
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No Church Is Perfect!

Bill Brinkworth

Every church has its good and bad members. The church that John was writing to in III John had several of both categories I am sure. However, the apostle wrote of three members in particular in his letter.



Two of the members were good representations of what a Christian should be. Gaius was the “well-beloved” (III John vs. 1). He was most likely a friendly sort that many loved. Many reports from the church told John how Gaius was a blessing in the church family (vs. 3, 6), and how he attended to the needs of other Christians (vs. 5). It was evident by his care and concern for the brethren that he truly loved the members of his church.

Another blessing in the church was Demetrius. He also had good things said about him (vs. 12).

These two were an encouragement to the apostle’s heart. It is always good and encouraging to hear how people get saved, get their hearts and lives changed by the Holy Spirit’s work, and go on to do much for the cause of Christ and people of God.

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Reasons for Going

Bill Brinkworth

There are two categories of reasons for people’s attending church: spiritual and unspiritual. Here are some reasons for attendance that fall under those divisions:

Spiritual:

- ☞ “The Word of God is taught, believed, and practiced there.”
- ☞ “I grow spiritually at that church.”
- ☞ “The Holy Spirit convicts my heart through the preaching.”
- ☞ “It is where unsaved people can come and get saved!”
- ☞ “The church is a place where I can serve God.”
- ☞ “The music glorifies and honors God.”

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No Church Is Perfect!

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People like those two encourage others by their proof of love for the family of God. They are sometimes part of the reason many stay faithful in church. They make others feel welcomed and make it a friendly atmosphere. However, even if we are saved we still have sinful flesh to contend with, and there will often be “stinkers” in every church. In this church of III John, there was one in particular like that. His name was Diotrophes.

Diotrophes had a terrible testimony in the eyes of others. This man, instead of showing the spirit of meekness the other two good members showed, exhibited improper Christian behavior. He was known for always wanting recognition (vs. 9). I can just imagine he was one of those that always had something to say. He was the one that got much of the attention and the glory. He even refused to accept John the Apostle, and any missionaries John sent to the church (vs. 10). This discontented man did all he could to talk poorly of John and his work. Diotrophes even had people kicked out of the church, that showed charity to anyone John sent to the church.

This type of man ruins the

testimony of any church. When man tries to get the glory, which Diotrophes was trying to receive, the Holy Spirit is grieved; and the work for Christ in a ministry can come to a screeching halt. That is one reason many of our once thriving churches are now spiritually dead and doing little for the cause of Christ. Men like this man, unfortunately, often become an excuse for many to leave a church.

In every ministry there are the two types of attenders and members. The good workers are the light in this dark world. They make the church work as a Christian family. The evil (vs. 11) should be ignored and not be the reason anyone leaves a church. If one does leave because of a “Diotrophes”, one can be assured that the Holy Spirit is not involved in the decision. If you have one or more of “Diotrophes” in your church, do not leave. Get your eyes and ears off of them, and keep them on the Saviour. He will never let you down, and He is the reason you should be attending anyway!



**“If you are seeing the obstacles,
your eyes are off the Saviour.”**

Reasons for Going

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- ☞ “There are good spiritual influences there.”
- ☞ “It is a good place for my family to learn more about spiritual things.”
- ☞ “It is where God wants me.”

Unspiritual:

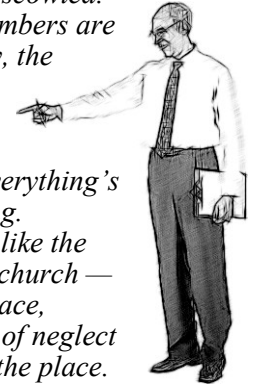
- ☞ “I feel good when I listen to the preaching, and don’t feel guilty about anything.”
- ☞ “It’s a place to learn about God, but they’re not fanatical about it.”
- ☞ “It is a very modern church. They use the newest bibles, music, and popular books.”
- ☞ “It’s a good place to get clients for my business.”
- ☞ “Going there will make me look like a Christian, and people will trust me more in my business.”
- ☞ “Going there eases my conscience, and I feel like I am doing something spiritual.”
- ☞ “I can give money to them and count it as a tax write-off.”
- ☞ “It’s not a strict church. I can do anything I want, and no one says anything.”
- ☞ “It is the most popular church in the area.”
- ☞ “The services are always entertaining.”
- ☞ “It’s a place to meet girls.”
- ☞ “The music is almost the same as I listen to at home; just a few of the words are different.”

Are your reasons for attending church “spiritual” or “unspiritual”?

It’s You!

Author Unknown

*Sez I to myself, as I grumbled
and growled,
“I’m sick of my church,” and
then how I scowled.
“The members are
unfriendly, the
sermons too
long;
In fact, it
seems that everything’s
wrong.
I don’t like the
singing; the church —
a disgrace,
For signs of neglect
are all over the place.*



*I’ll quit going there, and
won’t give my dime:
I can make better use of my
money and time.”
Then my conscience sez to me,
sez he,
“The trouble with you is,
you’re blind to see
That your church reflects you,
whatever it be.
Now come, pray, and serve
cheerfully;
Stop all your faultfinding and
boost it up strong;
You’ll find you’ll be happy
and proud to belong.
Be friendly, be willing, and
sing as you work,
For churches are not built by
members who shirk.”*

**“If we ever found a
perfect church, we would
have to leave because
we would make it
imperfect!”**