
church?

Posted by honeyspur - 2006/03/15 01:35

I was raised in an atheist family.

In fact, my mother made it really clear to me early on that if I was going to practice religion, I was not to discuss it with her. Like most people, I spent the majority of life trying to please my parents. I went along with their atheist rants, even though I did feel them or relate to them. Atheism always seemed like anger towards God for not living up to human standards. So, I played the atheist role. Secretly curious and calmed by spirituality of all practices. Around 17, I went to my Christian relatives and told them secretly of my interest and my fear of making my mother angry. So we sat up in the night, reading the bible and whispering to each other the meaning Christianity.

I still resisted giving my heart to God for years afterward - pretending that I, too, was angry.

It wasn't until this last year that I began admitting to the people in my life that I believe in God and am drawn towards the Christian faith.

I feel so new in this world, that I have not a clue as to how to go to church. Or which church to go to. All the different denominations speak to me in their own way and I am left confused as ever.

I read the Bible and realize it is interpreted differently and am not quite sure how to find out what would be a good way to go.

These questions might seem ridiculous, but please tell me: is it ok to just show up at church and try it out? Do you have to make a commitment to that church if you are going to attend service? I mean, if I went and decided this wasn't the church for me, would it be ok to not come back?

I feel awkward and clumsy - like I don't know the proper ethic on going to church. Thank you for any advice you have to give.

=====

Re:church?

Posted by Mystique - 2006/03/15 02:30

Church is a very individual thing.. so I will try to answer you with just my own opinion but you follow your heart :)

I can't speak for all religions but in my church and all the different churches I've attended (with friends etc) would not say a word about you coming for service. You don't have to join a church to attend a service. None of the ones I've ever attended even said a word or noticed me as an 'outsider'. Some have get togethers after where you can meet some of the people if you like. You can arrange to speak with the priest/minister of any given church and ask questions as well. If one does make you feel uncomfortable for any reason.. find another. Even if you selected to go to a particular 'faith' each congregation of people as well as the priest/minister are different. I'd suggest visiting different ones of interest and seeing what feels right to you. God doesn't care how you pray or where IMO he hears us all.

I visited one with a friend (I don't want to offend anyone so won't mention the faith) but it scared the bajeezus out of me lol I was raised Catholic, have family that are Baptist and friends of other denominations so I, myself have visited more than just 'my' church. I'm not one for the holy roller philosophy or banging on doors to push religion down someone's throat.. where others are all about 'saving' people. So I suggest going and following your heart as to what is right for you.

I hate to get into religious discussion because so many are so adamant that their church is the only one lol but I see an organized religion as a foundation or bridge if you will to one's own spirituality. I found that I can take something from many religions and follow my heart as to what is right for me. I believe that there are good points and bad points to so many different ones but that the essence of them all are basically the same. How you worship or where is your decision and no one should make that decision for you.

I hope that helped.. good luck in finding a place you feel you really belong *hugs*

=====

Re:church?

Posted by hsmom - 2006/03/15 19:26

Praise the Lord for your decision of faith, honeyspur!

The Bible calls us to fellowship with other believers, and that means to be a member of a local church. I am still struggling myself with this issue. Check out churches!! Go visiting, sista! You will be enriched by the worship, even if you don't choose to stay as you check out your options.

=====

Re:church?

Posted by honeyspur - 2006/03/17 06:46

Thank you both so much for the support. I am very sensitive about this issue, unsure and don't know how it will turn out, but as my uncle told me that night we talked in whispers, "Follow your heart."
I will go to church - one in my neighborhood actually, around the corner - and I feel better knowing I can just show up and it's not a big deal.
Thanks again ladies and God bless!

=====

Re:church?

Posted by Jubilee - 2006/03/18 15:07

I understand very much where you are coming from, and you are going to be enriched by your spiritual seeking, I'm sure of it. Attend all the churches, you will know after awhile which one feels right, which one is speaking to you, which one feels like it will help you grow and learn, which one is made up of a community of believers that you would actually want to spend some time with. :-)

Don't be afraid. If questioned, simply say "I'm in the process of finding a church home, I haven't decided yet which one is for me." Other people understand that answer perfectly. You don't have to give out your address.....and you can always ask to speak to the pastor or priest in their office during the week, if you want to pursue knowing more about their church.

Also, attending an adult Sunday School and/or Bible Study at a church, as well as the service itself, will give you insight as to their beliefs and values. Many churches are too political for me, not at all what I was looking for back in the 1980's when I first started going to church. This played a big part in my decision to join a church that had more liberal global views. You yourself may be looking for something completely the opposite, and that's okay, too.

Also, I will give you a bit of advice that I heard on a Christian radio station once -- never attend a church where the pastor can't be fired. Everyone needs a supervisor, these people are only human. Make sure the Vestry or Elders or whatever they have making financial decisions for the church are not relatives and in-laws of the pastor, too. And use common sense -- if something doesn't seem right about what a Church is teaching, and if they don't welcome questions and debate -- then it's time to move elsewhere.

=====

Re:church?

Posted by Dianna - 2006/04/26 19:17

In Matthew 5, there is a verse that says, "Blessed are the hungry, for they shall be filled". Jesus said that to the people that are hungry for something beyond what they are taught. And praise God, you are hungry.

I would like to tell you that you CAN visit as many churches as you can to find the right congregation for you. We as believers are called the church and in God's eyes, there are no denominations. My suggestion to you is that each one you visit, you will have a feeling of welcome, indifference, acceptance, or whatever. I have to say that when I started going to the fellowship that I am attending right now and have been attending for the last couple of years, I felt an overwhelming sense of love for one another. Others that have visited or started attending have felt the same thing. One lady recently said, "The love here is so real that it almost drips off my hands." (And she was just visiting.) ;) Talk to God about where He wants you to be because He has a perfect fit for you in the body of Christ. You will just know it when you find it. But don't feel that you are obligated to join just because you visit. You are on the right track.

God bless you richly

=====

Re:church?

Posted by Dianna - 2006/04/26 19:20

Hi,

"Blessed are the hungry for they shall be filled".

Jesus said that to the ones that are searching for the answer to the confusion of "religion" and He promised that you will find fulfillment to the quest.

I think it is wonderful that you are seeking to find a portion of the body of Christ that you will fit into the best, because that is what the church is, the body of Christ. Visit as many as you can until you find one that you just seem to fit into from the minute you step into the door. If you feel an overwhelming feeling that you have finally come home, then you have.

God bless you

=====

Re:church?

Posted by OnFireForGod - 2006/05/23 17:53

huneyspur, first I want to say It is awesome you have given your heart to Jesus! :) It worried my heart to read you started telling people in your life, I know that isn't an easy thing to do! Now, to answer your questions! First I hope you still don't feel silly for asking the questions because it is completely and totally normal! "is it ok to just show up at church and try it out?" Yes, absolutely it is ok to go to church just to try it out, that is one of the first steps in finding which church to go to. "Do you have to make a commitment to that church if you are going to attend service?" To my knowledge, which is not all that much, you do not have to make a commitment to the church if you are trying to find the right church, however when you find that right church and have been going for a while, most churches will want some type of commitment! " if I went and decided this wasn't the church for me, would it be ok to not come back?" In order to answer this question I first want to say this: I am a bible college student and this year my class mates and I actually discuss this very question! Yes it is ok not to go back, however depending on how long you attend that church before deciding it is not right for you, I would encourage you to go talk to the pastor, and explain to him why you are leaving! See I learnt this past year that it is hard for a person to grow in their own spiritual life if there are hard feelings or unresolved issues with the past church, though I can't explain why! And if there is none and that's not why you decide to leave let the pastor know there is nothing wrong, it is just not right for you, cause that will also encourage the pastor by letting him know he never did anything wrong! hoped this helped! Take Care and God Bless, You will be in my prayers, Sincerely, OnFireForGod!

=====

Re:church?

Posted by alistrong - 2006/05/25 04:41

Huneyspur,

First of all, welcome to your new family - the Family of God:) ! I apologize for the late welcome, but I just now found this thread. Let me tell you that I have really been a Christian since 1984. But at different times, & for important reasons, the Spirit of God has let me know that it was time to move on from one church to another. So I have been out there doing what I affectionately call "church shopping" a few times myself. I think someplaces you can walk into right away & feel like it doesn't really matter to anyone that you're there. And that's not the way you want to feel around family! You should feel the welcoming presence of the fellowship of Believers in the church you want to call home. The place that my husband & I now call home has a very caring pastor & staff, who look to God's Word in ALL things & model their lives after the life of Jesus Christ - and teach us to do the same. While it is encouraged it is not essential that you become a member there - you don't get any special perks or discounts for becoming one. You do it just because you want to join the family. Over the last 8 years or so, since the world has become a more complicated & harder place to live in, we have reached out to the community around us to meet every need we see arising through small groups & ministries. We've been very blessed to find this wonderful church home.

How have you been doing in your search? Is there anything else we here on the boards can help you or encourage you with? It CAN take time to find the right place. Don't be discouraged. And I will keep you in my prayers.:)

Jackie Lynn

=====

Re:church?

Posted by jorja - 2006/06/14 11:47

Church Signs.....

1. There was a church that had problems with outsiders parking in its parking lots, so they put up a sign:
CHURCH CAR PARK - FOR MEMBERS ONLY,
TRESPASSERS WILL BE BAPTIZED!
That took care of the problem!
2. "No God - No Peace? Know God - Know Peace."
3. "Free Trip to heaven. Details Inside!"
4. "Try our Sundays. They are better than Baskin-Robbins."
5. "Searching for a new look? Have your faith lifted here!"
6. An ad for one Church has a picture of two hands holding stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments are inscribed and a headline that reads:
"For fast, fast, fast relief, take two tablets."
7. When the restaurant next to another Church put out a sign with big red letters that said, "Open Sundays," the church reciprocated with its own message: "We are open on Sundays, too."
8. "People are like tea bags - you have to put them in hot water before you know how strong they are."
9. "Fight truth decay - study the Bible daily."
10. "How will you spend eternity - Smoking or Non-smoking?"
11. "Dusty Bibles lead to Dirty Lives"
12. "Come work for the Lord. The work is hard, the hours are long and the pay is low. But the retirement benefits are out of this world."
13. "It is unlikely there'll be a reduction in the wages of sin."
14. "Do not wait for the hearse to take you to church."
15. "If you're headed in the wrong direction, God allows U-turns."
16. "If you don't like the way you were born, try being born again."
17. "Looking at the way some people live, they ought to obtain eternal fire insurance soon."
18. "This is a ch_ _ ch. What is missing?" ----- (U R)

19. "In the dark? Follow the Son."

20. "Running low on faith? Step in for a fill-up."

21. "If you can't sleep, don't count sheep. Talk to the Shepherd."

gorja
:kiss:

=====

Re:church?

Posted by mistyblu - 2006/11/18 01:02

Some churches give Bible studies so you can learn some basic scriptures.

I never went to church when I was growing up--my father was Methodist and my mother Catholic and we were baptized Methodist but we never went only one summer to revival or something when I was very small.

When I became around 20 yrs old it became a big issue to me..I would read and read the Bible and be somewhat confused but at peace too. I would drive to the nearest church on Sundays and sit and watch people go into church and I was afraid and shy and wanted to go in so badly.

2 year later a man came to my door and talked to me about his religion and then later a young girl was sent to study with me and she took me to her church but I didnt like it there. Nor did I like the fact they printed their own Bible. It was a year later that I finally found a church and someone to study the Bible with me. The knowledge gained changes your entire life and creates a new you.

God is in us and follow your gut feelings in things as you learn.

=====

Re:church?

Posted by mistyblu - 2006/11/18 01:06

Cool Pastor gorja!

=====