



General Topics :: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement

Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement - posted by Mattie, on: 2009/12/16 16:55

What are your thoughts on the modern day 'house/simple church movement'?

Is it healthy or unhealthy?

If so for either/or, why? Share your perspectives.

Re: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement, on: 2009/12/16 17:09

Asking if house churching is healthy or not is like asking if every Baptist church is healthy.

Depends on the people and the leadership. If the structure is scriptural, and the people love Jesus and are living by the Spirit... then it is healthy.

My question is: is going to a some building to sit and rows and watch the show healthy? Not if thats all it is. In most churches FELLOWSHIP is what is missing... and people have finally figured that out.

The house/simple church movement is growing because God desires for His people to be a FAMILY... not an organization or corporation. The Spirit of God moving in people, and putting a desire in their hearts to live life with their brothers and sisters in the Lord in transparency and truth is what is causing the growth of house/simple churches.

Of course there are dangers... but no more so than in the American institutional corporation church.

Krispy

Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2009/12/16 17:13

KrispyKrittr wrote:

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Of course there are dangers... but no more so than in the American institutional corporation church.

Krispy

Yep

Re: - posted by Mattie, on: 2009/12/16 17:16

Thanks for the thoughts guys.

Re: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement - posted by ccchhrrriiss (), on: 2009/12/16 18:26

"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, **and breaking bread from house to house**, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." - Acts 2:46-47

:~)

Re: - posted by wayneman (), on: 2009/12/16 18:39

I would say that the house church is inherently healthier than the corporate church, because it doesn't include professional ministers.

I'm all for the House Church Movement, but their faith in a Church Model to restore the glory of the Apostolic Age reminds me of the poor old Plymouth Brethren.

The Brethren Movement began in the 19th Century when four Irishmen noticed that there was no biblical basis for having a Clergy and agreed that Clergymen were largely responsible for all the disunity, error and worldliness in the church, so they organized a fellowship "run strictly along New Testament lines," with no ordained ministers. They were confident that this Church Model would end sectarian strife and provide a basis of unity for all believers. By the 20th Century, the Brethren had schismed into 48 warring factions. A whole cascade of divisions and subdivisions resulted from increasingly inane Baptism controversies: "household" or "believer's baptism;" indoors or outdoors; in running water or still; one dip or three; forward or backward. One faction, the River Brethren, added to river baptism the ordinance of foot-washing. But then a controversy arose: should one Brother wash and another dry, or should both functions be performed by the same Brother? They divided into the One-Mode and Two-Mode River Brethren.

The HC movement is pretty much the same way. Their pursuit of ecclesiastical perfection leads to constant bickering over every minutia of doctrine and practice. (There are allegedly exceptions, but I haven't found any, and I've been looking for a long time.)

I recently heard an irate clergyman denouncing the HC movement for "meeting in living rooms and playing church!" Yeah, fighting, schisming, competing for converts, slandering each other - they're playing church all right!

The HC has the potential to be the basis for the next great move of God because of the absence of revival-killing clergymen. But first we have to get Christ-centered instead of Church Model-centered.

Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2009/12/16 19:00

wayneman wrote:

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The HC has the potential to be the basis for the next great move of God because of the absence of revival-killing clergymen. But first we have to get Christ-centered instead of Church Model-centered.

I can say that I have not run into what you are speaking of. All of the House Churches that I have attended/run have been Christ centered. In fact, it can be scary to most people who are unfamiliar with HC's.

Folks are so used to the church centered model, that when they see something that is actually biblical, they tend to think of it as "cultish". Once they attend, they see that it is the "institutional church" that is more cultish than HC's.

Note~ I am not speaking about all institutional churches, just the experiences that I have had.

Blessings

Re: - posted by wayneman (), on: 2009/12/16 19:28

Quote:
-----I can say that I have not run into what you are speaking of. All of the House Churches that I have attended/run have been Christ centered.

I need to take Church hunting lessons from you! I'm glad your experience has been positive. I have seen two spontaneous moves of the Spirit: both sprang up outside the church; both were suppressed and then shut down by professional churchmen.

One was a Friday night Bible Study. We weren't trying to start a church; just gathering for fellowship. The churchmen told us to break it up because, they said we were "cultish." Yes, practicing Christianity without professional assistance is cultish.

That is why I'm looking for a good Living Room Cult - I've had it up to HERE with the clergy.

Re: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2009/12/16 19:48

I would say the "movement" is unhealthy, though some of the individual churches may be very healthy. By "movement", I'm speaking of the faddish type house churches who just don't like having anyone tell them what to do. Just as mega churches are buying into the culture, these churches are too, although less obviously. Just as consumerism is a snare, so is egalitarianism. So, forsaking all types of leadership, form, or structure is not necessarily the Biblical answer, in my opinion.

Paul states that what is of "first importance" is the message of the Gospel (1st Corinthians 15). So, given the choice of joining with a body of believers who have bad ecclesiology, and joining with a body of believers who don't get the Gospel - I would choose to join with the group who gets the Gospel, even if the church structure isn't completely Biblical. From my experience, the simple church "movement", is not very sound on their teaching of the Gospel. Some of it is influenced by books like "The Shack", etc.

I understand and sympathize with the concerns of those in the house church "movement", but I don't think they are heading in the right direction. It is entirely possible, and more Scriptural, in my opinion, to have a vibrant, Spirit filled church with functioning elders and teachers. If a church gets the Gospel, and has (or is moving towards) a real eldership (not just talking a lot of how eldership is Biblical), then I commend them, and I think the Scriptures do as well.

May the Lord give us light in these things...

P.S. - One caution. I have noticed those in the house church movement often taking little jabs at ordained elders in existing churches by calling them "clergymen", "professional clergymen", etc. I would strongly caution against that. *"They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries..."* (2nd Peter 2:10).

With care in Christ...

Re: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement, on: 2009/12/16 19:52

There really isn't a right or wrong with house Church meetings. Believers just gather together and Christ is in the midst. It's the form of government that God would have us all do. A close knit community of caring for our own, and doing good to those that are not.

Re: , on: 2009/12/16 23:11

Well, the early church certainly didn't have giant cathedrals and chapels to meet in. They met in houses. But as far as I see it, I don't think the Lord makes a big deal about forms in terms of what type of shelter you worship Him in. The church is not the building, or the house. It's the people. It all depends on the people, their doctrine, their devotion to Christ, their fellowship, their power with God, etc.

The house church movement in the USA greatly varies from fellowship to fellowship but for the most part I think a lot of it is deviating from biblical example (in terms of the official "movement"). That is, I see a lot of majoring on minors such as the forms of meeting, a lot of over-emphases on "body ministry" to an extreme and an anti-leadership complex (not to mention a despising of traditional pastors and elders). I've seen house churches weak on the Word of God without spending time to expounding upon and teaching the Word in their meetings, wanting everyone to talk in one meeting, and therefore destroying any opportunity for sound Scriptural exposition, teaching and application. In the name of "body ministry" they usurp the role of God-given teachers in the church and the result is a Body that is ignorant of Bible doctrine. A lot of the movement takes some great truths but runs to such an extreme with them that it becomes error. At least, this is what I've seen in personal experience.

Preaching and teaching the Word is a significant part of corporate worship and a major purpose of the local church which is supposed to be the pillar and ground of the truth. The truth has to be preached. I understand that there are many errors with the "institutional" model as well. I think what I'm for is something about half-way in between the two, no matter whether it meets in my house or in a large chapel. The Bible needs to be a central focus in the church when it meets, that God may speak and His Word may work its power to convert, convict, refine, purge, wash, empower, and edify.

Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2009/12/16 23:40

TaylorOtwell wrote:

Quote:

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I agree with most of what your saying. I can only speak on my situation.

Our House Church is one of about 16 that are unified together in my city. We all meet on different days of the week, and most come together for fellowship every Sunday, as some would say, as a church body... so as not to forsake the asse mbly.

There are 5 elders in our church, all men who are approved through the biblical standards set forth in the bible. The fellowship on Sundays is spectacular in my opinion. Worship technically starts at 10:00am, but people show up early and later than that. Everyone is in fellowship and we always have to break it up so we can start, between 10:15-10:30am. After worship (which includes singing and a message), we usually end around 12:00 - 12:30pm BUT, fellowship doesn't end there. If it is our House Church's month to open and close, I usually don't walk out of there until 2:00-3:00pm. No one leaves "to get home before the Packer game".

The reason that I bring up my situation, is because there are a lot of folks who think exactly like you do. They think that people start house churchs because of not wanting authority placed on them, or that those who start house churchs are a negative disgruntled bunch that don't "fit in" any where.

Well, yes and yes, and no and no.

Yes, authority that is lorded over people and/or is not bibically sound is not tolerated. Yes, those that start house churchs MAY be disgruntled... with a system that has been abused and brings people further away from Christ then it does guiding them to Him. This is true then.

No, authority IS wanted by most House Church people that I know. True biblical authority that is. Authority that is not hypocritical. Authority that SERVES instead of demanding service to it. Authority that is not afraid to wash others feet and exault Christ above their own "position".

No, we are not disgruntled with the Church. We are only disgruntled with the hypocrisy of a church system that has long held its members in bondage and slavery to a system that we see glorifies men over Christ.

From what I have literally seen, the direction of House Churchs leads people to Christ, a deeper love for the father and allows for the Holy Spirit to move in their lives. Do ALL gain this? no. But I see radical trasformations at the heart level with people in house churches. I do not see or hear about much of this at institutional church settings in my area.

So which shall it be? Why can it not be House Church and Sunday worship? Why can't it be biblical all around? Well, it can and it does. Glory be to the Lord! :-)

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2009/12/17 0:24

Quote:

No, authority IS wanted by most House Church people that I know.

Biblically our concept of authority has been perverted by much of the institutional model. There is definitely Biblical authority of elders and such in the church. But their "authority" is found not in the militant running of a programs and services, but in their demonstration of what it means to live a truly Christian life. That is where their authority comes from. The life they live and the things they teach are to be submitted to, because the life they live and what they teach is in keeping with what Christ and the apostles lived and taught.

This is an "authority" almost entirely foreign to those in an institutional setting, who prefer to be more like Caesar than Christ. In Bible college we were taught to hide behind our authority and the institutions we represented, and not to get too close to the sheep, because if the sheep saw how we really lived, we would "lose" the power of our office. Not all are like this of course. But a great many are.

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Excellent word, Jimmy.

Those who are seeking to meet in the simple pattern of the early church (in homes) are not "running away from their masters," as Nabal accused David. In fact, they are seeking to give the Master His true lordship in the liberty of the Spirit.

"For where the Spirit of the **Lord** is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3.17).

But having a vital home gathering where the Spirit of the Lord has His liberty is not easy to come by. In fact at times it can be... lets just say less than edifying. But more and more these days, hearts are hungry and reaching out for something the institutional church is incapable of providing them with.

And the time is at hand when the Cloud is going to rest over these little churches, vindicating them. The institutional churches are not going to like that (I am generalizing), and we are going to be surprised where persecution comes in that hour.

Re: - posted by Mattie, on: 2009/12/17 11:39

I will pose this as a question to those who believe the leaders are the authorities of the church....

Evidently, most believe (I used to myself) that leaders have authority over the church and we are called to submit to that authority because of passages like these:

Hebrews 13:17 'Obey your leaders and submit yourselves to them, for they watch out for your souls'

1 Peter 5:5 'Likewise, you younger ones, submit yourselves to your elders'

The word 'submit' itself gives us the idea that there is an authority that we are to place ourselves under.

Interestingly enough, the same word 'submit' is also used in 1 Peter 5:5 when it says 'yes, all of you, submit to one another'

as well as Ephesians 5:21 'submitting to one another out of the fear of Christ'

So my question then comes, what is it that we are submitting to? If submission is to leaders, why would the same word be used for everyone in the church? What is the submission? What is the authority?

Your thoughts.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2009/12/17 12:03

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Excellent question. Our mutual submission to one another happens when we as a body recognize the Lord's life, authority, and ministry existing in another human being. We all mutually submit to one another as we see that ministry take place through our brother and sister in Christ. This submission is where we take on a posture to yield ourselves to what the Lord is doing through another believe, so as to make it possible to receive whatever it is the Lord wants to give us through them.

Our submission to those "over us in the Lord" is in the same manner. However, those who we recognize as elders in our midst are given an extra place of honor, so that we would be especially considerate of what the Lord may be saying to us through them. Why? Because these individuals are older saints who have proved themselves faithful to the Lord and to the Church, and are recognized models of what it means to be a Christian. They have a known history with God and with the Church. And while they must also mutually submit to the Lord and what He does through us, they do have a special place of honor in the Church so that if some crucial decision must be made about something, as father figures, they have the ultimate say in the house they have been appointed over.

However you break it down, the "authority" ultimately resides with Christ. Every believer only has "authority" over another to the degree they conform their lives to the faith once and for all handed down to the saints, as modeled by Christ and His apostles. Anytime any saint tries to assert something that is clearly contrary to this apostolic faith, and that deviates from its doctrine and practice, that person is operating outside of their authority, and should not be submitted to in what they assert.

This view of authority is clearly at odds with most of the institutional models of ministry. Most institutions say their ministers have authority, regardless if what they believe and practice is at odds with the New Testament. Thus, you have many "pastors" who militate the most crazy things. They dream dreams and see visions that have nothing to with the faith, and demand submission and obedience to what the Lord has shown them.

Not to sound rude, but such men need to sit down, shut up, and learn to be a mature saint. They are not a pastor. They should not be submitted to in these things, and if necessary, clearly opposed. Of course, it should be done in a loving and kind manner, according to the way Christ showed us to correct a brother in error. Much mercy must be shown, and much prayer should go up before the throne.

I hope this helps you.

Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2009/12/17 12:11

Mattie wrote:
Quote:

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Your thoughts.

Submission to Christ first, then to your family, then to the church.

Re: , on: 2009/12/17 12:34

Quote:
-----I would say the "movement" is unhealthy, though some of the individual churches may be very healthy. By "movement", I'm speaking of the faddish type house churches who just don't like having anyone tell them what to do.

This is precisely why I said the house church must be structured according to scripture.

I also agree the church leadership is not there to lord their authority over the lay people. KingJimmy I think has the best t

ake on that.

Krispy

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiisss (), on: 2009/12/17 13:10

Good points, Jimmy...

I would remind people that the English etymology of the word "church" is drawn partially from the word "house" itself. Of course, the word "church" itself was a questionable translation from the Greek word "ekklesia." A more literal translation would be "assembly" -- as people who were "called out" in a gathering. In fact, some individuals and groups prefer to refer to the Body of Christ as a "gathering" rather than an hierarchical institution.

This is not to say that the Body of Christ did not have a sense of authority in the first century. Paul and Barnabas were faced with a question about circumcision. The leadership in Antioch couldn't reach a consensus, so they sent Paul, Barnabas and some other believers down to meet with the apostles *and* elders in Jerusalem. As far as hierarchy, I don't know that elders were ever officially designated (like deacons). They may have been, in fact, old men...or men who had been in the faith for a longer time.

Yet, as Jimmy pointed out, today's denominations (which is a very, very different thing from THE "church") follows an institutional hierarchical structure in order to maintain a sense of "authority" in a quest for "decency and order." The designated, licensed or ordained ministers in such organizations are typically men who are recognized as authorities by the authority of the denominational organization (and its leadership) itself. I think that we can all agree that this is very subjective. There are pastors within certain denominations that I would hardly agree with concerning doctrine. Yet, they are designated as a "pastor" simply because the denomination's leadership (mostly made up of other similarly designated "pastors") agree to designate them as such.

I have even spoken with one person who even told me that the ONLY reason that he became a "pastor" was because he was encouraged to do so by his mother, father, siblings and ministers from his local congregation. He told me that he hated his "job," and realizes that he engaged in the "wrong profession."

In addition, there are pastors from "churches" that I don't regularly attend but I would also recognize as pastors of the greater Body of Christ. This is true of evangelists, teachers, deacons, etc...

As such, I see the Body of Christ as a living organization -- like a literal body. I Corinthians 12 talks about the makeup of this body. It isn't held together by denominational, organizational or hierarchical structure -- but by the blood of Jesus Christ. To become a "member" of that Body -- to become infused in the "gathering" or "assembly" -- you merely need to belong to Jesus Christ in truth. Now, I am a part of a local congregation. It even belongs to a particular denomination. Yet my allegiance isn't to the local pastor, congregation, denomination, or set of doctrines espoused by such. My allegiance is to Christ Jesus. I feel the liberty to fellowship, encourage and challenge (and BE encouraged and challenged) by believers from other congregations near and far. I will also say that I have felt that some men were "pastors" or "elders" who didn't actually hold such a title. Yet, they were men who others turned to when they had questions or needs. I suppose that might be a part of the "de facto" or "de jure" question.

I would also remind people who are opposed to "house" churches altogether to consider the Body of Christ in persecuted lands. We applaud the faith of those who serve Christ (or have served Christ) in the face of persecution. We marvel at the vitality of the Church in Cuba, China, North Korea or in Muslim nations. Yet, most of these believers do not meet in "official" or "authorized" denominations. They meet in underground gatherings -- usually in homes.

In fact, the true Body of Christ never actually organized in a hierarchical sense until after the Protestant Reformation (and yes, I don't consider the Roman organization itself to have much semblance with the true Body of Christ). This "organizing" didn't take place until after more than 1500 years of the Church. So what did the Church do between 70 A.D. and 1500 A.D.? Who were their designated "authorities?" Where did they meet? Who "ordained" men as "ministers" of Christ? Where did they meet?

Although the official state religion of the Soviet Union was atheism, there was an officially recognized (and authorized) "church." Yet many true believers did not submit to the authority of this "church." Rather, they continued to meet together in homes, barns, and in secluded places. They submitted to one another. Who knows? Perhaps a time is coming when this will be the case again. Through such a time and condition, I don't think that there will be any legal or tax protection f

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or local, national or sectarian congregations. Who will be "ordained" -- and by whom? Who will be recognized as official "leadership?" Maybe (and just maybe), it will become like it was supposed to be all along.

Re: Authority - posted by ShalomoBR, on: 2009/12/17 16:05

4 Then they went from town to town, instructing the believers to follow the decisions made by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. 5 So the churches were strengthened in their faith and grew larger every day. ACTS 16:4-5

Well the Ultimate and true 'authority' has to be The spiritual authority, which is the Lord himself which He confers to those he places through divine order and separated lives who are truly called of God. These were closer to the Lord Jesus and had first hand intimate fellowship with our Master. The great cloud of Martyrs depicted throughout scripture. Who were all baptized with salt and FIRE! Their examples cannot be written off as 'oh that was back then' type of corrupt philosophy. He is the same, yesterday, today and forever.

To go any further with this consideration in today's North American church climate, would be very complicated as selfishness is so rooted in the national culture. Godly integrity is forsaken for SELF-SEEKING, man pleasing and power/money coveting actions, some of which actions have destroyed the faith of many by bitter disappointment and acts of personal offense and betrayal. Thus just like America was birthed of both the 'Rebellious' religious pilgrims AND the always rebellious covetous opportunists, so the church has both contained in it. The Winnowing/sifting Jesus pronounced concerning Peter, is God's process of building and purging his church. Welcome to North America!

The authority is found submitting under Him who searches men's hearts!

The Lord is Sovereign...PERIOD. HE knows which are HIS!
Keep your self in the LOVE of God...He will winnow out all the chaff...first from our lives and then what remains will be HIS KINGDOM which shall not be moved!

He is faithful who called you, and will do it!

May the Lord give us simple and profound understanding of HIS Holy ways by HIS word!

Good thought provoking/scripture digging questions MattieBoy! Love you! Glory to God!

Shalom
ShalomoBR ;-) :-)

Re: - posted by MattChenier (), on: 2009/12/17 17:09

Quote:

Mattie wrote:
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Your thoughts.

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I think this is an improper "dividing the word of truth." Are you trying to say that there is no authority in the church? Why else would God require these authorities to give account for our well being if they were not responsible for our well-being.

The Bible says that man was not made for the sabbath, but the sabbath was made for the man. However, if the sabbath wasn't honored, then it wouldn't be a blessing to you.

Likewise, the church is not made for the leader, but the leader for the church. However, if you don't honor your leader, you won't be blessed. This is why the scripture you quoted out of Hebrews states that "this is unprofitable for you." We often rebel or disrespect our leadership in order to get back at them, but really, we are the ones who suffer because they are there to benefit us.

Last thing, if you don't submit to your leader, then leave the church. Either get behind him (support him) or get out of his way. Either God has called you to support that vision, or he has not. If he has, then do it as unto the Lord whether you like it or not. If God hasn't called you to support the vision, then why are you there. No excuses. God isn't confused about His will.

The original post and most the others showed a healthy balance. Thanks.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2009/12/17 18:15

Quote:

Either God has called you to support that vision, or he has not.

I'm sorry, but where has this idea come from? The vision of each local congregation is supposed to be fundamentally the same: establishing the saints firmly in the faith and raising them up to be more and more like Jesus. I don't see "vision-caster" or "dreamer" as one of the qualifications or virtues of pastoral ministry in the Scriptures. Biblically, the "leaders" of the church are supposed to be men of God who demonstrate what it's like to live the Christian life, and others are supposed to follow them in how they live.

Men who raise their heads up above the congregation saying they have a unique vision for the local church that is to be followed should probably have their heads cut off and thrown over the wall.

Quote:

Either God has called you to support that vision, or he has not... If God hasn't called you to support the vision, then why are you there.

This is not Biblical, and wreaks of the carnal authoritarianism that exists in Christendom today. It's a divisive and dangerous doctrine that has its origins in hell.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2009/12/17 18:37

The ministry is supposed to be a service, whereby one demonstrates what it is to live the Christian life, and exists to help other saints in living that very life. These men have their authority in the example they leave for others to imitate. They are spiritual fathers who look to equip their sons and daughters for a life pertaining to godliness. Thus, they exist to serve, not to be served.

The "follow my vision" statement that you hear pounded from pulpits across America today is totally contrary to the attitude of service, and the example left by Christ and the apostles. Those who would lead in the church must have nothing less than the attitude of a slave. They are not "servant-leaders" as pop-theology teaches. They are simply slaves.

General Topics :: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement

Instead of you being at the beck and call of the elders, the elders are supposed to be at the beck and call of everybody else. Instead of the congregation existing to help fuel and fulfill the pastors vision for the local body, these men are supposed to exist to help the body discover their God ordained purposes and callings, and to equip them to fulfill their individual purposes and callings within the local church. Pastors exist to help equip them for this end.

But today we don't have this setup. Everything is backwards. Instead what we see is the "people conquering" spirit of the Nicolaitans existing in the clergy caste system, where a single man is declared "the man of God" over the local body. He rules and reigns, and anybody who dares to question his authority or vision or purpose is dealt with accordingly. In fact, such people are usually pushed out the door and told to go somewhere else where they can have a vision they agree with. It's not supposed to be this way.

We are supposed to be a people who are only of one vision and purpose. The definition of the church and what it is called to be is very clear from the Scriptures. Every local fellowship must have as its main and central vision the same thing that is contained within the Scriptures. Romans 8:28-29 and Ephesians 4:11-15 makes it clear what that is: Being conformed to the image of Christ, and growing up into the fullness of His stature, obtaining the unity of the faith.... or in other words... producing true MEN of God.

Anything that even remotely competes with this vision is surely from hell. Oh no doubt, each local body might have certain activities it engages in for a time that distinguish it from other local churches. But this isn't supposed to be a top-down sort of vision, that the people must accept and center around. Indeed, just because a man may have a unique calling and vision from the Lord doesn't mean it should become the central focus of the local church. It should be supported by the local church. But in a healthy church, you may very well find several such things, and rightfully so.

We are one body with many members with many different gifts and specialized callings. Not everybody is going to be engaging in the exact same ministry as their brother or sister is. But whatever the case, we are called to discover what our particular niche is, and flow in that. But all of that is supposed to flow out the common vision of the local church as grounded within the Scripture.

There is no room whatsoever for one-man to dominate the local assembly with his "vision" from the Lord. It's nothing but arrogance to do such... and arrogance is not from the Lord. Therefore I say, if such a brother does not repent of such: Off with his head and throw it over the city wall. Such a man is a wolf in sheep's clothing, and must be dealt accordingly.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2009/12/17 18:59

Mattie Wrote:

Quote:
-----So my question then comes, what is it that we are submitting to? If submission is to leaders, why would the same word be used for everyone in the church? What is the submission? What is the authority? Your thoughts.

The church is the worldwide universal body of Christ. But we obviously cannot all come over to the house on Friday night (My house is way too small and my wife would not appreciate me inviting that large a crowd), so there are local bodies of believers that we also label "churches". Originally these were all the believers in a city. I think many of us live in cities where this too would be very impractical. So, denominational splintering aside, there will be several local bodies even in one city. I believe it is pretty much irrelevant where we meet. We are simply not supposed to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and are to increase our meeting together as we see the day of the Lord drawing near.

The church, however, is not without Biblical leadership and governmental structure. But the one man show and the "church board" structures are found nowhere Biblically.

The church was established on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Eph. 2:20-22. It was to these ministry gifts that the mystery of the church was first revealed and then spread. Eph. 3:1-5. God then established a way in which the body could be fed and brought up into maturity. It was in having five ministry gifts operating actively in the church. Eph. 4:8-16. These five equipping gifts are the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher (Some may put pastor and teacher together. I won't be dogmatic although I have some good reasons to believe them separate.) God has a divine order for the ordination of leadership in each local body. The apostolic gift, due to the nature of that gift, recognizes and or

dains eldership in a local body. Scripturally, that eldership was almost always a plurality. There was never a "one man show". You will NEVER find in the entirety of scripture that a "pastor" was placed over a local body, although someone in an eldership may be a pastor in the sense of Eph. 4:11. Another interesting fact is that the term Bishop and Elder are synonymous and describe the same office. Titus 1:5-9 clearly shows this as it uses the terms interchangeably. This eldership then appointed deacons to serve as leaders over different aspects of practical ministry.

A few things should be observed about this structure. While it is governmental, it is ruling or leading from the bottom up. These are servant leaders. Look at the greek word for deacon. No lording over another here. We submit to one another in love, in service, preferring one another. We also submit to the leadership He has placed in the body. Submission is not blindly falling in lock step with another man's direction. It is recognizing the calling of God on a person's life to minister to the body in leadership and following that person's lead as they follow Christ.

I am of the opinion, and that quite strongly, that the local church will never walk in the power and anointing that God intends until we restore God's design for church structure. The body cannot be prepared and equipped properly for the work of the ministry without all five of the equipping gifts in operation.

Oh, one more thought. No man can choose to be an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher. These people are called of God from before the foundations of the world to operate in this capacity in the body. No amount of "wishing I was a pastor" and time spent in seminary will make any man a pastor. It is a calling of God, NOT an office. The same with the other four. Now, everyone can teach, and should, but that does not make them a teacher in the sense of Eph. 4. A man can desire to hold the OFFICE of an elder as well as a deacon. 1 Tim. 3:1.

Interestingly enough, I am seeing this structure manifesting itself more and more. There was a structure built on these basic principles in the past that got way off. They began to revel in titles, "Bishop so-and-so, Apostle so-and-so". No one in the Bible was ever called by such a title. Paul said, my name is Paul and I am called to be an apostle. He never said, "I am Apostle Paul". There is a big difference between the two.

Interestingly enough, it seems that with the right structure in place, the place of meeting takes on less and less significance. Our fellowship began in a home, and now we are remodeling 10,000 sq.ft. in an old shopping center as a place to meet and coordinate ministry. But the heart of the church is not effected by the place where we meet. It is simply a place out of the weather that we can use to accomplish the purposes God has given us to accomplish.

Travis.

Re: - posted by MattChenier (), on: 2009/12/17 19:27

I never said that every "vision" was God's. You are not understanding the "vision" that I mean. Each local church is a move of God. Yes it is in essence all one move of God. But God separates different church bodies in different areas. I believe God has a church that he desires every person to be a part of. Whether home or not. I believe that if God isn't calling you to support a church, then you need to leave it. You judge way harshly on what I mean. You need to chill a little. I made one comment that is not satanic and you blame me for carnal authoritarianism and say that my doctrine is from hell. God bless you too brother... umm..... Perhaps you should even have inquired a little more before passing such judgment.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2009/12/17 19:42

I deeply apologize. It looks as if I misread you. Something you said just sounded so much like some things that I've heard over the years that caused me to mispeak.

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2009/12/17 22:44

hi, while being a part of a very large church a group of us decided to meet week to week in a different home for a covered dish bible study led by the host and hostess of the week. it gave everyone a chance to study and minister amongst those who truly got to love one another. we became a unit of joy in our church and neighborhoods. the church now has over 1000 cell groups but without the rotation of leadership... great...jimp

Re: - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/12/18 0:17

Dear Matt,

Quote:
-----We often rebel or disrespect our leadership in order to get back at them, but really, we are the ones who suffer because they are there to benefit us.

Last thing, if you don't submit to your leader, then leave the church. Either get behind him (support him) or get out of his way.

Unconditional submission to anyone other than Christ is not biblical. I would agree with your statement if the church leader is faithfully preaching the word, and the issue of one's staying or leaving is merely a matter of God's call.

However, it is difficult and even wrong to walk away if the matter involves false teaching or unbiblical exercise of church "leadership". There are times when believers must stand up and resist an unworthy leader, for it is the unfaithful man who must leave the fellowship of believers. To simply walk away without exposing falsehood would be sin against those left behind.

*Gal 2:4-6 "This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. **We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.** As for those who seemed to be important—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance—those men added nothing to my message."*

Re: - posted by MattChenier (), on: 2009/12/18 3:37

Kingjimmy, Thanks for the apology. I usually can't stand to talk on this website because everybody is so itching to rip the throats of the church's false doctrines that I am judged very strictly by everybody on here. And what if I was saying what you thought I was? What are the odds you would have been able to bring correction to my life with that attitude? I am fairly secure in my beliefs and I have been bothered by that all night. Don't forget that we are not all ignorant unbiblical stereotypical American Christians. And even if I was, have mercy! Please. I barely got back on to even read your response again. God bless you and thanks again for your apology.

Re: - posted by MattChenier (), on: 2009/12/18 3:51

Leo_grace, I never said anything about unconditional submission. I agree that it is good to warn those who needed warned whether publicly or privately. But I wonder, how many false doctrines are worth destroying a church's faith in their pastor? Obviously some are, and obviously some aren't. If it's a big deal, speak up. If not, let it go. If you don't, you will destroy those who are weak in the faith. Then they will feel insecure and back away from God. And don't forget, if you need to state your opinion on your way out the door, do it, but don't pull the walls down on those who stay. Does this come from God?

I wonder how many of us wish for our children to spread gossip, backbite, and accuse us in front of others when we are wrong in our parenting. I wonder, what would it speak to your children for your wife to tell your children that you are an idiot and not to respect you if they disagree with you. NO! If we are wrong, then we are wrong, and unless it is a matter of life and death, then our children need to be obedient. God will bless them for honoring us. But what about in the church? Is it ok for a leader to go behind the pastor's back and start "correcting" false doctrines. Let it be done in the light or not at all! If it cannot be done in the light, then find a church where it can. Leo_grace, I am not accusing you of all these things. I am just speaking on the topic in general. Please don't feel that I am directing this all towards you. I am not. I have done all these mistakes in the past, and I am zealous to see these tricks of the devil stopped in the church. I wouldn't leave my church because I new God called me there, but I didn't agree on everything the pastor taught, so I made my life and everybody else's hell until I realized I was going to have to change. I won't get into all the change right now, it's too long ;)

General Topics :: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement

Re: - posted by Mattie, on: 2009/12/18 8:03

It is very easy to get personal in forums like this, judging the motivations of men's hearts, carrying assumption, and making statements based on our own experiences rather than the Scriptures.

My encouragement is that when we dialogue let us reason together from the Scriptures. Lets make the 'it is written' (in it's rightful context of course) the final say on these matters.

Re: - posted by Aussiedler, on: 2009/12/18 8:26

Quote:
-----I'm all for the House Church Movement, but their faith in a Church Model to restore the glory of the Apostolic Age reminds me of the poor old Plymouth Brethren. The Brethren Movement began in the 19th Century when four Irishmen noticed that there was no biblical basis for having a Clergy and agreed that Clergymen were largely responsible for all the disunity, error and worldliness in the church, so they organized a fellowship "run strictly along New Testament lines," with no ordained ministers. They were confident that this Church Model would end sectarian strife and provide a basis of unity for all believers. By the 20th Century, the Brethren had schismmed into 48 warring factions. A whole cascade of divisions and subdivisions resulted from increasingly inane Baptism controversies: "household" or "believer's baptism;" indoors or outdoors; in running water or still; one dip or three; forward or backward. One faction, the River Brethren, added to river baptism the ordinance of foot-washing. But then a controversy arose: should one Brother wash and another dry, or should both functions be performed by the same Brother? They divided into the One-Mode and Two-Mode River Brethren. The HC movement is pretty much the same way. Their pursuit of ecclesiastical perfection leads to constant bickering over every minutia of doctrine and practice. (There are allegedly exceptions, but I haven't found any, and I've been looking for a long time.) I recently heard an irate clergyman denouncing the HC movement for "meeting in living rooms and playing church!" Yeah, fighting, schisming, competing for converts, slandering each other - they're playing church all right! The HC has the potential to be the basis for the next great move of God because of the absence of revival-killing clergymen. But first we have to get Christ-centered instead of Church Model-centered.

That's a very good statement. It is amazing how deceived we can be, that we after all these lessons from church history still put our faith in outward things like "church models" etc. It is all about the heart, whether you meet in a church building or in a house.

Re: - posted by murrcolr (), on: 2009/12/18 13:21

Quote:

wayneman wrote:

The HC has the potential to be the basis for the next great move of God because of the absence of revival-killing clergymen.

The next Great Move of God does not start in the House Church Movement....

Re: - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/12/18 13:26

Matt,

Quote:
-----I have done all these mistakes in the past, and I am zealous to see these tricks of the devil stopped in the church. I wouldn't leave my church because I new God called me there, but I didn't agree on everything the pastor taught, so I made my life and everybody else's hell until I realized I was going to have to change. I won't get into all the change right now, its too long ;)

I understand you now. Thanks for sharing. :-)

General Topics :: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement

Re: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement - posted by Lysa (), on: 2009/12/18 13:29

To all,

The one problem I have with regular church is I can't find a church that actually practices what they preach!! One that actually takes the gospel outside of their four walls to a lost and dying community ON A REGULAR BASIS. I've noticed that some do venture out at Christmas or Thanksgiving but that's it, it's not a ministry in the church. They don't take care of the widows and orphans either (Oh, they might help a widow once but God forbid they take her on like John took on Jesus's mother).

My question about home churches is and I don't even mean to be sarcastic because I don't even go to a home church let alone a regular one; but how do home churches, the one's who are so close to Jesus it's scary (grin), how do they take Jesus out of their living rooms to a lost and dying community ON A REGULAR BASIS? How do they care for the widows and orphans?

Are there any?

If there aren't any, in my humble opinion and it's just mine but they are no better than the IC. Like I said, I don't attend any so I do not have a dog in this fight just an honest question about them.

Re: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement, on: 2009/12/18 13:44

Quote:

-----just an honest question about them

Hi Lysa,

The house churches with which I've been associated, did not have any conversation during their meetings, apart from announcements and clarifications about them) usually at the end, or just before the children went out. The rest of the time, people focused on the Lord, on God, in worship, prayer, the operation of the gifts of the Spirit and the exposition of the written word. It was very serious. Every individual was expected to engage with God all the time every day, and meeting together was supposed to give folk an opportunity to share their bread.

With regard to your question, there was usually a large house at the centre of the operation, or, members of that house church community could, would, did, take in some people sometimes, to their own homes. Now, there are many questions around this topic, because we are not Israel, with general, culturally inculcated hospitality traditions. Also, on Sundays, there was a hospitality rota, so strangers could be fed.

Lastly, the general principle was employed that if you see a need you have an obligation to fix it, or to connect the needy person if they are willing, to someone who can help better than yourself.

James 2:16

In other words, it's down to the individual conscience, means and obedience.

Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2009/12/18 14:36

Lysa wrote:

Quote:

To all,

The one problem I have with regular church is I can't find a church that actually practices what they preach!! One that actually takes the gospel outside of their four walls to a lost and dying community ON A REGULAR BASIS. I've noticed that some do venture out at Christmas or Thanksgiving but that's it, it's not a ministry in the church. They don't take care of the widows and orphans either (Oh, they might help a widow once but God forbid they take her on like John took on Jesus's mother).

My question about home churches is and I don't even mean to be sarcastic because I don't even go to a home church let alone a regular one; but how do home churches, the one's who are so close to Jesus it's scary (grin), how do they take Jesus out of their living rooms to a lost and dying community ON A REGULAR BASIS? How do they care for the widows and orphans?

Are there any?

If there aren't any, in my humble opinion and it's just mine but they are no better than the IC. Like I said, I don't attend any so I do not have a dog in this fight just an honest question about them.

Here is my example.

1. When we are together on Sunday's for fellowship, the following applies:

There is no paid position or "pastor" in the church. All who "work" in the worship service volunteer. All money donated goes to orphans/widows or those in need in the general local mission field

Part of the money collected is used for the local body needs, ministry and basic operations costs (lights, rent, etc..). The rest is given to orphanages in Mexico and Romania, VoM, local area missions. Local area missions can range from buying folks used cars that have no transportation, to giving money to those who have lost their jobs, homes, etc...

All money is given away. Nothing is saved. The Lord provides.

2. When we get together for Home Church the following applies.

Most House Church leaders/facilitators will find out what the needs of those who attend the HC are. Money, time and love is poured into these folks on a more personal and intimate level. Some of the HC's are lead to give to specific "charities". Others are lead to give more outreach in the local community.

Examples of what is happening right now at some of the different HC's that are part of our fellowship...

One HC took all of its members a month ago to NY to Times Square Church to see/hear Brother Ravenhill speak.

Another one has started a Wednesday night Youth group for 16yrs old to collage aged young adults. It is run by young men that have gone through a year long leadership training hosted by HC leaders and elders. The main purpose of this is to equip High School and collage aged young adults to witness Christ into the schools and peers.

Another HC is very involved with VoM and assisting the persecuted church around the world. They feel lead to give each week into a fund that they send out to VoM.

Another HC is heavily into street ministry/witnessing. Lately, they have been witnessing and giving to the homeless in the area. A true harvest field.

Another HC is into giving to those in need through the mobile home communities throughout a 100 mile radius. They have been giving donated bread from a bagel shop to different people in need throughout these communities. Many, many people in these communities have been blessed by this and it has opened the door to witnessing the Lord.

There is so much more...

Yes, there are many who try to live as Christ commanded. Hopefully my small examples have helped brighten your spirit. :-)

General Topics :: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement

Re: - posted by MattChenier (), on: 2009/12/18 15:08

Quote:

The one problem I have with regular church is I can't find a church that actually practices what they preach!! One that actually takes the gospel outside of their four walls to a lost and dying community ON A REGULAR BASIS.

Lysa, It sounds like the local body of Christ in your area badly needs your help. It sounds like they are not focused on evangelism like you are. It would be the will of God for you to aid your brothers and sisters in prayer and patient encouragement until they see the will of God too.

It would be foolish of us to consider sharing the gospel with the wicked enemies of God when our own brothers and sisters are in the same jeopardy of hell-fire. Can these wounded family members count on you to help them? Surely casting stones of hypocrisy won't move them in the right direction. You must feel so blessed that God has granted you a like of perfect adherence to your convictions. You should consider helping others who are less fortunate.

"Do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith."

Re: - posted by MattChenier (), on: 2009/12/18 15:17

Micah,

It sounds like your church is heading the right direction. I am excited for you. What a blessing to have a local body of believers that you can be proud of. This makes evangelism so much easier. I am truly envious of such a wonderful body.

I just don't see what the difference is between your church and my church. Other than your church meets in a house and mine doesn't. We do all those things you mentioned, except that we pay our pastor's bills so that he can "give himself fully to the word and to prayer" Which he does. I think it is wonderful that nobody "lives of the gospel" in your church, but this is not unique only to house churches. I know many denominational churches that do this.

I am not at all against house churches, because there is no difference between a house church and a church that meets in a stadium. Is God scared of large crowds?

Again, God bless your church, I am mostly excited that your so confident and encouraged by the works your church shows. I hate going to church when I have no expectation of blessing (not that its always the churches fault).

Re: - posted by DBen (), on: 2009/12/18 15:23

Quote:
-----I wouldn't leave my church because I new God called me there, but I didn't agree on everything the pastor taught, so I made my life and everybody else's hell until I realized I was going to have to change. I won't get into all the change right now, its too long ;)

Matt,

I would certainly be interested in hearing about the changes if you would be inclined to share them. If you don't feel they are appropriate to the thread you could email me directly.

I realize that I am asking of your time so, please know I will consider all that you share and it will not be wasted.

Thanks!

General Topics :: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement

Re: - posted by wayneman (), on: 2009/12/18 18:18

Quote:

murrcofr wrote:

Quote:

wayneman wrote:

The HC has the potential to be the basis for the next great move of God because of the absence of revival-killing clergymen.

The next Great Move of God does not start in the House Church Movement....

...because...?

Re: - posted by wayneman (), on: 2009/12/18 18:29

Quote:
-----The one problem I have with regular church is I can't find a church that actually practices what they preach!!

Lysa,

A pastor acquaintance of mine once preached a sermon on the importance of "commitment," incongruously based on the text, "Let your Yea be Yea, and your Nay, Nay." He said, "If you say you're going to do something, do it!"

Days later, he backed out of something because he didn't feel like doing it.

I said, "So much for keeping commitments!"

He said, "Hey, I don't practice what I preach because I'm not the sort of person I'm preaching to!"

I think he was speaking for all professional churchmen when he said that.

Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2009/12/18 19:08

MattChenier wrote:
Quote:

Miccah,

It sounds like your church is heading the right direction. I am excited for you. What a blessing to have a local body of believers that you can be proud of. This makes evangelism so much easier. I am truly envious of such a wonderful body.

I just don't see what the difference is between your church and my church. Other than your church meets in a house and mine doesn't. We do all those things you mentioned, except that we pay our pastor's bills so that he can "give himself fully to the word and to prayer" Which he does. I think it is wonderful that nobody "lives of the gospel" in your church, but this is not unique only to house churches. I know many denominational churches that do this.

I am not at all against house churches, because there is no difference between a house church and a church that meets in a stadium. Is God scared of large crowds?

Again, God bless your church, I am mostly excited that you're so confident and encouraged by the works your church shows. I hate going to church when I have no expectation of blessing (not that it's always the churches fault).

General Topics :: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement

Praise God Brother.

I don't know if you have had the opportunity to read any past threads on similar topics, but I am not against IC's, just the corrupt ones. Same for the corrupt HC's. If the Lord is moving in your midst, glory be to the Lord!

As for differences, I know nothing about your church other than what you have told me, so I will not speculate about differences between the two. But I will say that I rejoice with you and the Body about fellow brothers and sisters that truly place Christ above all else, regardless where and how they meet.

Blessings my friend!

Re: - posted by MattChenier (), on: 2009/12/18 19:34

Quote:

DBen wrote:

Matt,

I would certainly be interested in hearing about the changes if you would be inclined to share them. If you don't feel they are appropriate to the thread you could email me directly.

I realize that I am asking of your time so, please know I will consider all that you share and it will not be wasted.

Thanks!

I would love to. Sometime in the next day few days I will do it. I appreciate your interest. It truly was one of the most radical changes God has effected in my life. It seemed to happen almost instantly too.

Re: church needs me? - posted by Lysa (), on: 2009/12/18 21:26

Quote:
-----MattChenier wrote:

Quote:

Lysa, It sounds like the local body of Christ in your area badly needs your help. It sounds like they are not focused on evangelism like you are.

"Do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith."

You would think that they would need help but I live in the Baptist (Bible) Belt and being female plus (the second unforgivable sin) divorced... they tend to be a little picky on who helps them!! (which suits me b/c I have an assurance from God that the His calling is without repentance!)

I have found somewhere where they don't care what condition I "used to be in" and that is the local women's jail! The highways and byways love me! That's good enough for me!

General Topics :: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement

Re: - posted by MattChenier (), on: 2009/12/19 3:40

I understand what it can be like to be rejected by the church. Of course, rejecting them in return is not Christianity. I am not saying that you need to commit yourself to any specific church. But, if you won't go to any church because of it, then you need to consider your situation. It seems that you have let some people keep you away from all church gatherings. This is not what is best. I am not saying you are in sin because of your situation, I just don't think you should write off all churches. You especially should not harbor bitterness if you are.

Re: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement, on: 2009/12/19 4:59

MattChenier said

Quote:

-----I understand what it can be like to be rejected by the church.

I would be interested to hear something about the rejection you suffered, and in what ways you feel it is comparable to the common experience of divorced women, who might have legitimately expected 'church' to support them at a time of unspeakably profound distress, but instead are greeted with anything but?

Re: - posted by TracyInMD (), on: 2009/12/19 6:15

Boy I hope to read this whole thread but to your question "What is the authority?" I've had this same exact question in the last few months.

Something I now observe: Certain preaching seems more "authoritative". By this I mean that I've seen preaching since Nov 2007 that "produces" something. Something of righteousness that is manifest when I hear it. I WANT to obey it. It makes me think of that scripture that spoke of Jesus "He didn't teach as one of their scribes but as one having authority." The sermons I watch/hear from the revival conferences are examples of this. It makes me think THIS is what God had in mind when scripture says "Preach the word..." Something is produced that I must heed and it doesn't depend upon the fame or oration skills of the speaker. My exact thought has been "these men are on the authority of God", and I wish to follow and learn much from them.

The difference is amazing to me with typical Sundays verses some of this preaching I've heard. The Sundays seem (from my perspective) as merely teaching the technical words on the page and not the deeper MIND and understanding from God. So often the typical sermon will reference things in life like CULTURE, just assuming I am doing that thing. For example, some pastor will reference a TV show or movie and I think to myself, "My pastor doesn't mind if I watch that show." I mean, a lot of times whatever cultural reference the man speaks of, I do not do it. It seems like the preaching assumes I should just go along with the world. Few pastors will strongly say "do not sin" but offer instead "I know, we all do it." This just isn't something I want to follow. "Thanks for nothing," I often think.

I wonder if these men are on the authority of God at all! I used to shock myself thinking that, but now I'm getting used to it. I mean, one place I was at recently had about 3 times saying from various pastors "too often I am concerned more about MY honor than about God's" and they said it so nonchalantly that I wanted to burst out "The altar is always open!!" Of course I wouldn't dare, but that was my thought. I wish I could have a pastor as wishing to simply DIE for Christ and not die of a heart attack trying to keep up the feverish pace of fruitless programs.

Re: - posted by MattChenier (), on: 2009/12/20 2:58

Quote:

Alive-to-God wrote:

MattChenier said

Quote:

-----I understand what it can be like to be rejected by the church.

I would be interested to hear something about the rejection you suffered, and in what ways you feel it is comparable to the common experience of divorced women, who might have legitimately expected 'church' to support them at a time of unspeakably profound distress, but instead are greeted with anything but?

This sounds like you are judging me... but, I will still answer.

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I was greatly rejected by many church members for being zealous for the things of God. Many members of the church preferred complacency over compassion. I, being a brand new christian and church-goer, badly needed their support and encouragement, but often got avoided or shunned. I am not saying I didn't need some shunning for being a little rough around the edges, but complacent christians tend to be selfish when it comes to thinking of others. I was being rejected by the church for loving God.

I hope that measures up for you. If not, please forgive me for trying to sympathize.

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2009/12/20 4:43

hi, as an old man i reflect on my youth in baltimore...tormented by demons...struggling for my sanity...headed for a place of eternal torment. in twenty four years there i never met a christian and never heard the gospel once. maybe they were arguing with each other over eternal security or which bible to read or how bad the church was that they went to etc...but as a varsity athlete and one of the top dancers in the state..no one loved me enough to tell me about Jesus not once...danny ost led thousands and thousands to the Lord in mexico and i never heard him speak a word about the things we argue about because he had a vision of hell with people .mexican people crying out "but no one ever told me" what is really important to you but your and my own actions of obedience in love.jimp

Re: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement - posted by Know-Him, on: 2009/12/27 15:20

Quote:
-----What are your thoughts on the modern day 'house/simple church movement'?

I came across an interesting statement on the Back to Jerusalem website of the Chinese house churches. Speaking of their desire to work with local churches in their missionary movement as far as possible, they state -

Quote:
-----Another example would be if some local church strongly desires to build church buildings. This would be incompatible with our vision because we don't believe the world needs another single church building. They need Jesus, and they need to worship and grow in God's grace with other believers within their own homes, according to the pattern of the first church in the New Testament (see Acts 5:42, 20:20, Romans 16:5, etc.)

For a work of God to grow quickly it needs to be simple and easily reproducible. I see this as the strength of simple house churches. It is easier to plant another one as there is no need for a "trained minister", building, and so much that the institutional church could not survive without.

Re: wayneman - posted by Lysa (), on: 2009/12/27 16:18

Quote:
-----by wayneman on 2009/12/18 15:29:19
A pastor acquaintance of mine once preached a sermon on the importance of "commitment," incongruously based on the text, "Let your Yea be Yea, and your Nay, Nay." He said, "If you say you're going to do something, do it!"

Days later, he backed out of something because he didn't feel like doing it.

I said, "So much for keeping commitments!"

He said, "Hey, I don't practice what I preach because I'm not the sort of person I'm preaching to!"

I think he was speaking for all professional churchmen when he said that.

Wayne,

I've read this several times since you wrote it, not knowing really what to say! This is truly sad.

The last church I was a member at (about 3 1/2 yrs ago), I confronted in a very loving manner the pastor with three different lies he had told me and told him I was leaving.

Long story made short; I was complaining to the Lord how he lied to me and then wouldn't admit it! The Lord spoke and

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said, "So what he lied to you? What about those little 'white' lies that you tell to avoid confrontation?"

Talk about cringing!! The Lord knows how to get to the heart of the matter, does He not?!?! So with His help, I stopped telling those little white lies and faced what ever I needed to face. God is so good like that!

God bless you!

PS: I'm not saying your guilty of this, not at all. I just wanted to share my story of having one of thoses "preachers" as well!

Re: - posted by wayneman (), on: 2009/12/27 17:44

Lysa,

When the Lord dealt with me about this issue, I was surprised to realize just how much I relied on little white lies to lubricate inter-personal relations, especially at work. I was also surprised to discover how unnecessary it is!

Wayne

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/12/27 19:44

Quote:

-----I was also surprised to discover how unnecessary it is!

So true; so very true! No, it is true!

ginnyrose

Re: Thoughts on Simple/House Church Movement - posted by housechurch, on: 2010/8/31 22:15

The house church has less to do with location, and more to do with function. Those who meet in a house church or simple church often want all members to participate. They do not agree with a weekly sermon, while the saints sit mute. If you look at the model of century one, you will see that the saints were like family.

I find that the institutionalism of modern church structure, has fallen way out of line with the church Christ died for. We are his body, many parts.

If you want to find a good house church or let people know where one is, you can post it on (<http://www.housechurchdirectory.com>) House church directory

Re: , on: 2010/9/29 19:40

Totally agree!! House Churches by an far do not want the "one man show". They realize that God is too big for one man. That is why the Lord has a Church. Since the Holy Spirit lives in each member, and is working in each member's life, there might be something very valuable that the Lord wants us to hear from someone that might otherwise just be overlooked in the BIG organization.

Not all meetings are great. You learn as you go to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and do things "decently and in order". I would rather be a part of something organic where people are honestly trying to hear the Lord and prefer others than have to go to the well oiled show where everything has been practiced, beforehand. The Holy Spirit is spontaneous. But in most organized church meetings the Holy Spirit should be the HOST, but is rarely even the Guest of Honor.

God's family is just that, a family. Not an organization. So, let's look at a family. How do you "run" your family. What are your gatherings like? Do you sit everyone down in straight rows and preach/lecture to them, then pray and say "let's each dinner". Probably, you let everyone sit in their favorite chair, get relaxed, wear something comfortable and then you have a give and take conversation with them allowing all of them to share because all of them are important. and how many times have you learned something from one of the youngest ones?

Some of the younger ones when they are young may interrupt or go off in another direction (due to excitement, zealoussness or just plain youthfulness), but then you gently correct them not to be rude or change the subject. Your family grows and matures and everyone begins moving more in concert with each other as they learn from Mom and Dad (the mature ones) how to relate.

The Holy Spirit does this quite well with His children. And the mature Saints are examples and not really correcting every one all the time. It is in an environment of love and acceptance that people will grow and flourish. It must be organic like a family and be careful about too much "structure". It tends to kill spontaneity and drive the Holy Spirit out.

Organizational churches are very good at dampening a new believer's excitement. They may not intend it that way, but a young baby is not meant to sit down and shutup and be mature all of a sudden. Any of you fathers or mothers out there discourage your babies from being babies or do you just enjoy them and love them?

Re: - posted by reformer, on: 2010/9/29 22:00

Quote:

-----God's family is just that, a family. Not an organization.

Good point! Sadly though some "churches" have gone so far in the wrong direction it does not even resemble a family, more of a distant relative.

Re: , on: 2010/9/29 23:12

And Lysa says:

My question about home churches is and I don't even mean to be sarcastic because I don't even go to a home church let alone a regular one; but how do home churches, the one's who are so close to Jesus it's scary (grin), how do they take Jesus out of their living rooms to a lost and dying community ON A REGULAR BASIS? How do they care for the widows and orphans?

Pilgrim777

Well picture this:

You have this IC (Institutional Church) that is located physically in one place. It has 4000 people or 1000 or 25000. The people that go that church come from many different neighborhoods in the city and they bring all their energy, much of their time that they set aside for "spiritual" things and their financial resources to that one central location. Their energy helps populate all of the church programs and pay for all the good works, and they sit in church on Sunday as spectators for the most part and then when the service is over, they tell each other how good the fellowship was. Their money is brought to the storehouse to pay the hired staff (some people call them hirelings), pave parking lots, pay utilities, etc, etc, and then they go home having done their spiritual "duty" for the week. They may show up again on Wednesday or have a home group on Thursday where they are supposed to go over what the Pastor preached on the previous Sunday. All the time they are spending time with each other involved in some type of church sanctioned program.

Contrast that with home churches that stay in their neighborhoods where they expend their energy to be friendly to their neighbors (they have the time to) have money to help real people out (they have some money left over), and can spend extended time fellowshiping with the Saints and getting to know them intimately (Not spectators but real participants in each others life). They become acquainted with each others families, including the widows.

When they gather together for a corporate meeting they really believe they are gathering unto the Lord and not to a man. They endeavor to give Jesus Christ the preeminence in their midst by yielding to the Holy Spirit. They don't always succeed but at least they get the chance to keep on trying. Some meetings are great, and some may just fall flat. They are not choreographed or practiced. You cannot choreograph real life and people's hearts. Everyone wants you to participate and enrich the church with what the Lord is doing and speaking in your life. No one wants to hear from the same man every week. Although, at times there is a brother that has a burden to bring a teaching. In a family, that would be like having a father, whose wife and children are dumb and mute and must depend on their husband and father for all their life's needs.

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P.S. Jesus does not live in their living rooms, but in their hearts. So, if you are giving Jesus the preeminence in your life then everywhere you go you are alive in Him and He is alive in you and you touch people's lives without having to think about it or program it.

God wants us to be functional, not dysfunctional.

Re: - posted by ruskipaul, on: 2010/10/6 0:02

howdy

i belong to a slavic church and our congregation is about 175 members!what i love about the russian style of service is that we have ordinary members preaching on sundays and throughout the week. it gives a chance for many people to participate in the church and it is a blessing to see especially young =people preaching. Especially when God starts delivering powerful messages. the russian church system which gives the opportunity for the whole church to get involved, in choir, in preaching in saying a poem or singing a duet at church. thats what church is supposed to be all about with everyone participating instead of just sitting in the pews listeing to the ordained ministers speaking

Re: , on: 2010/10/6 1:24

That is very wonderful. All members of the Body of Christ have the Holy Spirit and should be encouraged to step forth and exercise their gifts, just like you would encourage your children to exercise their gifts and talents. A mature father, wants to take the back seat at some point and watch his children become leaders. Leaders in the Word is a paradox - servants.

Thank you for sharing that about your Russian service. I think I would be very comfortable and enjoy your fellowship.

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2010/10/6 3:11

hi, i am part of a large church,maybe 15000,and we have hundreds of home churches in our church...we have school clubs(churches)with about 5000 in them in every school in our city...we use these churches in every nook and cranny of our city to win the lost to Christ by having block parties etc. we are in the ghettos and have brought many drug pushers and users to the Lord as well as in businesses around the city... we had one service a few weeks ago where 80 came forward in one service at the invitation to lay their lives down at the altar...20 of those were members who brought the 60 from their home church.jimp