

What Do People Want?

Our congregation is blessed with many visitors. Most are looking for a congregation to attend all the time, but what do they want in a congregation? Some possibilities include close proximity to their home, friendliness, a nursery or “kiddie church,” entertaining services, an impressive building, a large membership, a dynamic preacher, numerous youth activities, or social programs.

However, the question is best answered by another question: Is your religion subjective or objective? The above are primarily subjective criteria for determining church membership, viewed from the subject’s point of view, based on one’s own feelings, likes, or dislikes. Generally, people approach religion subjectively either because they are avoiding truth or because they value feelings above the truth. But being objective demands going outside one’s self for the answer, appealing to an outside standard or rule.

On a more objective basis, a person might look for a church that belongs to Christ (Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 1:2) and is composed of people who have truly become Christians according to scripture (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:9-10; Galatians 3:27). They might also look for a church where the Bible is its only creed (2 Timothy 3:16-17) and where the members love Christ and one another (Revelation 2:5; John 13:35). Another important point would be the teaching of scriptural doctrine (1 Timothy 3:15; Revelation 2:14-16; 20-25) and scriptural organization. All congregations in the New Testament were independent and self-governing (Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Revelation 2-3) lead and served by elders and deacons (Philippians 1:1). People should look for a church that engages in scriptural worship activities in their assemblies, including singing (Colossians 3:16), praying (1 Timothy 2:8), partaking of the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7), collecting a contribution (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), and Bible study (1 Corinthians 14:18-19). A good congregation must also be involved in scriptural works such as preaching the gospel (1 Timothy 3:14,15; Philippians 4:15-17), edifying its saints (Romans 14:17-19), and relieving needy saints (Acts 4:34-35). Finally, someone should look for a church striving to be pure which is not afraid of discipline (1 Corinthians 5:1-8).

It will not be a church without fault. It will not be church in name only. It will not be a church without weak members. But, it will be a group of Christians who are working to follow the Bible in every way. Rather than attending the church of your choice, how about attending the church of the Lord’s choice?

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