

How to Leave a Church Biblically

Many Christians, at some point in their life find themselves, for one reason or another, needing to move on to another church. There are good and bad reasons for making this kind of difficult decision. In this session we want to consider the best way to go about leaving a local church. Read through the 9-point guide (How to leave a biblical church biblically) that outlines some important things you need to consider when facing this kind of decision.

Some Questions to facilitate discussion: Group leaders feel free to come up with some of your own questions.

- Have you ever moved to a new church? What was the experience like? Did you make mistakes?
- For personal consideration: Do you know of someone right now who may benefit from this list. Perhaps you could pass it along to them.

How to leave a Biblical Church Biblically

As per the final point in GCC's church covenant, there are times when it is time for members of a church to leave. Unfortunately, many members "leave" their local church for unbiblical reasons. And so, the following article – provided by Pastor Mark Dever – is a helpful guide for if or when the time comes to find a new local church. Here is his wise advice:

1. Pray.
2. Let your current pastor(s) know about your thinking before you move to another church or make your decision to relocate to another city. Ask for his/their counsel.
3. Weigh your motives. Is your desire to leave because of sinful, personal conflict or disappointment? If it's because of doctrinal reasons, are these doctrinal issues significant?
4. Do everything within your power to reconcile any broken relationships.
5. Be sure to consider all the "evidences of grace" you've seen in the church's life—places where God's work is evident. If you cannot see any evidences of God's grace, you might want to examine your own heart once more (Matthew 7:3-5).
6. Be humble. Recognize you don't have all the facts, and in light of this, assess people and circumstances charitably (i.e., give them the benefit of the doubt).

IF YOU GO . . .

1. Don't divide the body.
2. Take the utmost care not to sow discontent even among your closest friends. Remember, you don't want anything to hinder their growth in grace in this church. Deny any desire to gossip (sometimes referred to as "venting" or "saying how you feel").
3. Pray for and bless the congregation and its leadership. Look for ways of doing this practically. If there has been hurt, then forgive—even as you have been forgiven.