

Why People Leave Church and What to do About It?

by Nelson Searcy

Introduction:

Why do people leave churches?

When somebody leaves, it hurts.

Why do some churches grow and others don't?

- What are they doing that you're not doing?
- What are you doing differently, than what they're doing?
- What have they stopped doing that you're still doing?

"Growing churches spend very little time trying to reclaim people who have left and spend the majority of their time reaching new people."

Growing churches spend 80% of their time reaching new people and 20% of their time reclaiming people who have left.

Spend 20% of your time asking why do people leave your church.

Two types of people who leave your church:

1. The people you want to keep.
2. The people you want to leave.

Why the people you want to keep leave and what can you do about it.

1. POOR FIT

There are people who fit in your church and there are people who don't fit in your church.

Who are the people that we can best reach because of our style and our structure?

It takes all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people.

What do you do:

- You can bless them and allow them to leave.
- You can recommit to your vision.
- Examine your promotion.

You don't get to reach who you want. You get to reach who you are.

2. SIN

Matthew 13
Parable of the Sower

"Most of the time people who leave because of sin will not tell you."

Blaise Pascal's Congruence Principle: There must be congruence between beliefs and behavior.

It's very difficult for a person to go too long for their behavior to not match their beliefs. A person will either have to adjust their behavior or their beliefs.

What do you do:

- Examine the culture of your church to make sure it's a culture of grace.
- Keep the door open after they leave.

Do not conduct an exit interview.

- Keep them on your database.

3. LIFE INTERRUPTIONS

What are the good interruptions that people face in my church?

What are the bad interruptions that people face in my church?

What do you do:

- Catch the interruption early.

Walk your church through the interruptions of life.

Train your group leaders to share with you about the interruptions of people's lives.

- Reach out to the person and encourage them and offer grace.
- You can utilize 'Big Days' to reclaim people.

The Big Day is an all out push to reach new people for Christ and break a growth barrier.

4. A BAD EXPERIENCE

What do you do:

- Create an atmosphere where the church is made up of imperfect people.
- Be quick to seek forgiveness if you're the one needing forgiveness.

Romans 12:18

¹⁸If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Matthew 5:23-24

²³"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

Book references:

The Peacemaker by Ken Sande

Total Forgiveness by RT Kendall

As Christians, we give up our right to be offended.

- Run to conflict.

5. ISOLATION

"You have seven minutes to make a first impression." Fusion

"You have seven weeks to help people friendships otherwise they'll leave."

The Purpose Driven Church by Rick Warren

In most churches there is a lack of fellowship within the church.

The Assimilation Seminar by Nelson Searcy

What do you do:

- Preach on biblical fellowship.

Three areas of in your church that will help people build relationships:

1. Fun events
2. Service teams
3. Small Groups

Resource recommendation: The Activate Seminar

There are two types of people in your church:

INTROVERTS

EXTORVERTS

6. BOREDOM

Church provides a routine.

We must offer consistency and variety.

What do you do:

- Utilize 'Big Days'
- Random but exciting things
- Challenges

Conclusion:

Spend 80% of your time reaching new people.

Spend 20% of your time reclaiming people.