

Where Has The Lord Placed You?

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From time to time I meet people who no longer attend church like they once did when they lived in another part of the country. "We've been here for quite some time," they say, "and we've visited almost every church in town. There just isn't a church like the one we attended where we used to live."

They are absolutely correct. In fact, there are no two churches in the world that are the same. Just as God created all individuals to be unique and special, he allows every church to have its own identity.

Life is constantly changing. Each change produces certain anxieties and awkwardness. For example, most people feel apprehensive the first few days on a new job. Everyone else seems to know exactly what to do, but they can't even find the drinking fountain. Everyone else knows everyone by name, but they can't remember the name of the person next to them.

Who can forget that first day at high school? Some people have re-occurring nightmares long into adulthood of being lost in a big hallway and not remembering where their locker is. However, after a couple of weeks, high school became as normal as junior high was.

The reason people survive their first weeks on a new job or in high school is that they are committed to sticking it out. Not because they want to, but because the stakes are too high to do anything else. Their livelihood or their future depends on it.

When persons move from one church to another, it is only natural that things seem different and a bit awkward. Old friends are not there to greet them, the nursery attendants are new, and the service is not quite the same.

However, unlike a new job or entering high school, there are no financial or social pressures to push the person through those first critical weeks of learning about the building, meeting new friends, and worshipping in a new setting. So some people move from church to church, never attending more than a week or two, and all the while complaining that there is no church like their old one.

Persons who wish to become involved in a new church should not expect to immediately move into the same positions they held in their former church. The Bible says, *"Humble yourself under God's mighty hand that he may lift you up in due time"* (1st Peter 5:6).

The reason they held leadership positions in their former church was likely because they started out in positions of service and helpfulness. Jesus said, *"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much"* (Luke 16:10).

Persons trying out a new church will soon discover that they like some things about their old church better. But on the other hand, they will also likely discover that the new church has some aspects that are better than the church they left.

Happy people do not mourn for what they have left behind, but instead choose to be happy right where they are. Happy church members do not long for the good old days, but rather go about creating good days wherever the Lord happens to place them.