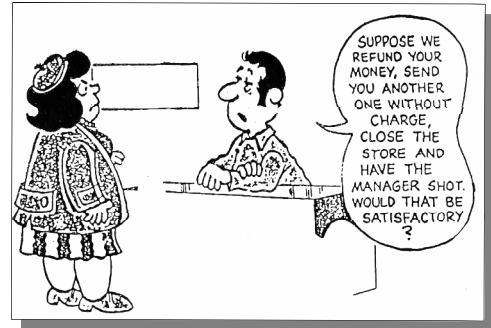


Finding Happiness in an Imperfect Church

How does a Christian find enjoyment, fulfillment and satisfaction in an imperfect church? The preaching is too long. The song leader leads songs that no one knows. The men that head the table mumble. The Bible classes are boring. The carpet is worn. It is always too hot or too cold in the building. There is dust on the plants. The pews have stains on them. There are cliques. Some members ignore you when you see them in stores. It's hard to invite your friends to come and worship with you, when all you see is imperfection. Dissatisfaction always leads to complaining, griping and often gossiping. Dissatisfied members tend to "bug" the contented members. They often threatened to leave, and sometimes they actually do. So how does a Christian find happiness among saints who often aren't very "saintly?"



Some close their eyes to reality. They just refuse to talk about anything that seems to be negative. One sister just couldn't stand the old, dirty curtains that hung in the auditorium. She told another sister her feelings. Instead of sympathy, she was told, "I just don't look at them." Denial does not solve problems.

Some choose to find a more perfect church. And often they do, for a while. They leave saying nothing but bad things about one church. The new church is nothing but great. But in time, imperfections are seen in the new place. The wandering Christians become disillusioned and off they go again, in search of a more perfect church.

The Best thing a Christian can do is to keep everything in a proper balance. The church is imperfect because it is made up of imperfect Christians. Everyone has good and bad days. On some days our spiritual life is strong and great. On other days we are not doing so hot spiritually. Put us all together and you have an imperfect church. What does this mean?

- Some sermons will be duds
 - Some songs I will not know
 - Some members will disappoint me
 - Some days I am amazed that they let me in the doors
- ▶ **Instead of complaining, do what you can to make things better.** If the church seems unfriendly, you can deny it, leave for a more friendlier place or you can start inviting people into your home and doing your part to make it friendly. If the place seems dirty, then help tidy it up. Put your energy into constructive areas instead of negative talk.
- ▶ **Practice grace among your brethren.** Don't expect them to be perfect. You are not. Be patient with them. Help them by sharing tips that you have learned.
- ▶ **Be a spark plug for others.** Find a few others and have a Bible study in your home. This will do wonders.
- ▶ **Remember the main thing.** We can get side tracked with curtains, carpet, and song books and forget that we are trying to get to heaven and share this wonderful message with others.

Yes, the church is imperfect. But it has Jesus as the perfect head. Be thankful that God allows imperfect people, like you and me, to have his perfect word and to be a part of his family. Perfectly imperfect—that's what we are!