

# HOW TO FIND A GOOD CHURCH

## 25 QUESTIONS

### THAT WILL SAVE YOU A LOT OF FRUSTRATING SUNDAYS

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Looking for a good church? Join the club. Church-shopping can be a long and painful process. To shorten your search, call or email the pastor of the church before you visit and ask the following questions. This might save you a lot of Sundays.

**STEP 1:** Some ways to find potentially good churches (you'll still have to ask these questions) is to go to websites such as [www.9marks.org](http://www.9marks.org), [www.cbspurgeon.net](http://www.cbspurgeon.net), [www.founders.org](http://www.founders.org) or [www.sermonaudio.com](http://www.sermonaudio.com) and conduct a church search.

**STEP 2:** Find Reformed Baptist churches within an hour's drive.

**STEP 3:** Go to their website and check the Pastor's seminary training and then quick scan the church's doctrinal statement and specifically look at the section on salvation and see if there is an emphasis on repentance. If the statement on salvation uses terms like "accept Christ," "pray to receive Christ," "ask Jesus in your heart," "all you have to do is...," "it's as simple as A,B,C..." then hit your escape key and look at the next church.

## WARNING!!!

Just because a church is doctrinally sound on paper does not mean it is a true church. There are many, many dead orthodox churches that even use the **1689 Baptist Confession of Faith** but do not go out and evangelize each week or do not practice verse-by-verse Bible exposition, or do not practice church discipline, or do not honor the church discipline of other biblical churches.

**STEP 4:** Now that you've narrowed the field of potential churches to a tiny handful it's time to send an email or call with the following questions.

### 1. What is man's biggest problem?

Seeker sensitive and felt-needs churches focus on man's hurts and problems. The Bible says that man's biggest problem is sin.

### 2. What must a man do to inherit eternal life?

Repent and trust is the Biblical answer. If the word "repent" is never used, say, "Thank you."

### 3. How do you deliver the salvation message?

Ask the pastor to describe specifically what he says. Does he encourage people to simply say a prayer? Does he tell people to ask Jesus into their hearts? The salvation message should

include: God's holiness, man's sinfulness, God's response (hell), God's kindness (Jesus on the cross), man's response (repentance and faith).

#### **4. How hard is it to become a Christian?**

The "formula" is simple, doing it is not. It is not easy to believe.

#### **5. How often do you talk about sin, righteousness and judgment?**

Balance is key. This should not be the only emphasis, but it should be a regular emphasis.

#### **6. Do you believe in a literal hell of fire & brimstone and eternal punishment?**

Jesus did (Matt.25).

#### **7. Do you use and expound on terms such as "hell," "the fires of hell," "turn or burn," "damnation," and other terms which seekers would find offensive?**

False churches work hard at prophesying smoother things than God allows.

#### **8. How seeker sensitive is your church?**

It is o.k. for a church to be "seeker aware" but seeker sensitive means that they lean toward seekers and not the saved.

#### **9. Who do you "do church" for, seekers or members?**

"Both" is not acceptable. Church should be done for members and the unsaved are welcome to attend.

#### **10. Do you intentionally try to leave out theological terminology?**

If he says yes, he is probably not trying to wean his members from milk to meat. Answers like, "We try to make our sermons accessible to everyone" are sermons that are not meaty.

#### **11. What is your preaching style, felt need topics or verse-by-verse bible exposition?**

Topical preaching is fine, but if a pastor never or rarely preaches expositively (verse-by-verse), then you are going to be learning from the pastor and not God's Word.

#### **12. When making your sermon applications, do you emphasize theology or relevant felt needs?**

Everyone should say their sermons are relevant, what you are looking for is if they teach theology.

#### **13. Describe your youth programs.**

If fun and games is the major (and usually first) emphasis, you have a youth program that is trying to compete with MTV.

#### **14. Describe your evangelism programs.**

Don't just accept, "We have an evangelism committee." Dig. Are they serious about saving souls?

**15. Do you as Pastor, practice door-to-door and person-to-person evangelism? Is this a requirement for your Ministry Workers?**

What the Pastor buys, flies. If the Pastor does not personally go out intentionally on a set time each week to initiate conversations with strangers to preach the gospel to them he will not make that a priority among the Leaders and Workers.

**16. What church growth model do you follow?**

Hopefully they don't have one. Churches should be reaching out to the lost, but churches that are plugged into new church growth models tend to follow man's modern ideas rather than the Bible.

**17. Do you believe the Bible contains any errors or contradictions?**

No equivocation allowed here.

**18. Do you believe in a literal 6 day creation?**

Jesus did (Matt.19:4).

**19. When you distribute the Lord's Supper, do you emphasize the need to examine yourself?**

Paul did (I Cor.11:27-32).

**20. Can a person who is living in a persistent lifestyle of sin inherit eternal life?**

Sinners can certainly be forgiven, but practicing sinners cannot inherit eternal life (I John 3:8, 9).

**21. Do you believe in the concept of "the carnal Christian"?**

A Christian can commit carnal acts, but they cannot live a carnal lifestyle (I John 2:3-4; 3:9-10).

**22. Does your church exercise church discipline? When is the last time you exercised church discipline?**

Paul said we should (Matt. 18:15-20; I Cor.5).

**23. Do you honor the church discipline of other churches?**

A person disciplined from local church should be disciplined from the universal church.

**24. Do your workers and leaders have to adhere to worker's standards as related to their core beliefs and lifestyle?**

**25. What are the essentials of the faith?**

For example: The Trinity, the substitutionary atonement, the bodily resurrection of Christ, and the necessity of repentance and faith for salvation.