

Is Your Church Entertaining You?

By Vijay Manuel

December 13, 2010



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If your church feels the need to entertain those in attendance, perhaps it's partly our own faults.

Church isn't a place to be *entertained*; movie theatres are. Neither is church a place where the 'program' should be sculpted to draw the highest ratings; awards shows do that!

So what is the church intended to be? Simply put, church is a place where followers of Jesus Christ can gather to worship God, pray together, study scripture, and encourage one another. It's a wonderful place to *serve*. The moment we cross over to the place of *needing* the message to be un-boring, the music to be really 'good', and the people to be perfect... we're heading in the wrong direction. The problem for the North American church is that we've been heading there for so long now, that it's a part of the 'norm' of what church is. We're actually breeding church leaders to be sensitive to the entertainment needs of the masses to the point that they believe that they have a good time of worship if the auditorium is full... that's pretty much it... it needs to be full. If it's not full, then the service was a failure and the focus becomes: "What can we do to correct this?"... better music?... better preaching?... more media?... the latest...something?

Have you ever heard someone say that they feel God is *calling* them to another church? Well, it's rarely a case of God almighty reaching down to *call* someone from one church building to another. More often, it's people looking for something new or fresh. If you really are wondering if God is calling you, ask what He's calling you to *do*... How will you serve?

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What do they need that you can bring? It's okay to want a change, I think. It's not okay, however, to pretend that the change you desire has been mandated from on high, if it hasn't.

Because of the general consumer-driven mentality so prevalent in society and even in the church, **your pastor feels some pressure to perform for you**. He wonders if you'll keep coming and continue giving if he preaches the truth about divorce, helping the poor, abortion, homosexuality, giving, service, materialism, etc. Your worship/music pastor wonders if she is still 'current' enough to attract new people to the building on Sunday mornings, and feels some anxiety if someone else leading worship is 'better' than she is. It goes on and on.

Will you join me in trying to change the way we look at church? Here are a few perspective shifters:

- 1) My church is not perfect & never will be.
- 2) My pastor will never be able to teach me all I can & should learn about God & the Bible through 45-minute sermons once/week. That responsibility rests with me.
- 3) 'Good' worship depends more on my decision to humble myself &, well, worship than on the skills of the musicians on stage or the choice of songs.
- 4) If I am a follower of Christ, I *am* a part of His church, and I must get involved by serving in some way.
- 5) The church's job is not to entertain me, so I refuse to evaluate them as if they're a tv show or something that I can simply change channels to find something better.

Friends, it's time to look at the church through a different set of lenses. Be the church of Christ by worshiping & serving!