

# From Seeker to Settled:

**A Step-by-Step Guide to finding  
the Right Church Family**





Embarking on the journey of finding a new church can be both exciting and daunting. Whether you're new to the faith, relocating to a new area, or seeking a Christian community that aligns with the Bible, the process requires careful consideration and discernment.

This comprehensive guide is designed to provide you with practical steps and insightful advice to help navigate the search for your church home. Each step is intended to equip you to find a church where God wants to plant you.

Throughout this guide, you'll discover strategies for clarifying your priorities and preferences, evaluating theological beliefs, and engaging with church communities both online and in person. This guide will equip you with the tools you need to make an informed decision.

Finding the church God wants to plant you in is about more than just finding a place to attend services. It's about finding a spiritual family where you can belong, grow, and serve. As you embark on this journey, may you be guided by the Holy Spirit's wisdom and discernment. May you find a community where you can experience God's love and grace in abundance.

Let's begin this journey together, trusting that God has a perfect place prepared for you to call home.

## Defining the Church

Before we begin to look for a church we must understand what the church is.

The church is not a building. We do not go to church.

The church is the assembly of Christians who gather to worship God in community and serve Him to make fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ.

When we understand this we will have the proper perspective to find the church that God wants us to be planted in.



## Motivation for seeking a new Church

This is an area that many Christians get wrong. Many Christians leave a church because they are offended or don't like the pastor. Here are some questions to consider before moving forward.

Am I offended by something in the church or a person in the church? Stay and resolve the issue. If you don't work this out you will not have God's blessing to move on. Your issues with the current church will only follow you to the next church.

Are you leaving because you don't like the pastor? If the pastor is correctly teaching the Word of God and fulfills the biblical mandate of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 for a leader then you should stay. Pray for the pastor and be involved in the ministry of the church. Your issues with the pastor will only follow you to the next church.

Is the church/pastor correctly teaching the Word of God? If the answer is no, first bring the concerns about wrong teaching with gentleness. If after three attempts to correct the wrong teaching then begin to seek a new church.



Is God telling you to move to a new church? Begin by praying and asking God to clearly speak to you if you are to move to a new church. Be sure to clearly hear from God before moving on. If God is not giving clear direction to move then stay where you are. It is extremely rare that God calls a person to move from one church to another. If it is clear that God is leading you to move churches then follow the remainder of this guide.



# Before You Begin To Look For A Church

## 1. Pray and Seek the Holy Spirit's Direction

Before embarking on the journey of finding a new church you must start with two things. It's essential to start with prayer and seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit. Dedicate some quiet moments to commune with God. Pour out your heart and express your desires, concerns, and hopes for finding a new church home. Ask for wisdom and discernment in the decision-making process.

**Start with Prayer:** While praying take the time to listen. Be attentive to any promptings or impressions you may sense from the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, guidance comes in subtle ways, so be open and receptive.

**Seek Confirmation:** As you pray, seek confirmation through various means. This could include reading relevant scriptures. Seek counsel from trusted mentors or friends. Notice recurring themes or messages that God is speaking to you.

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**Remain Open to God's Direction:** While seeking the Holy Spirit's direction, it's important to maintain an open mind. God's plans may not always align with our preconceived notions or preferences. Be willing to follow wherever you feel led, even if it means stepping out of your comfort zone.

**God's Timing:** Remember that God's timing is perfect. Even if the process of finding a new church takes longer than expected trust that God is working. He may be orchestrating events behind the scenes for your good.

Prayer and seeking the Holy Spirit's direction lay a firm foundation for the journey ahead. This will guide your steps as you explore potential new church communities.

## **2. List Priorities**

Before visiting potential new churches, take some time to reflect on your priorities. Here's a helpful framework for identifying what matters most to you:

**Teaching & Theology:** Consider your theological convictions. How do they align with the teachings of the church? Do you have specific doctrinal requirements or preferences?



**Community:** Contemplate what is needed within the church community to build relationships. The kind of relationship that will grow in depth and help in mutual growth in faith.

**Ministry:** Evaluate how you can serve and be involved in ministry. What opportunities for serving others are important to you? Does the church offer avenues for you to use your spiritual gifts and talents?

**Leadership:** Investigate the leadership style of the church. Does the church have a council of elders who fit the model of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1? Are the elders the spiritual leaders of the church? Are they seeking God's direction for the church? Do they oversee the church according to scripture? How do the elders handle conflict and sin in the church?

**Current Issues:** We live in an age where not every church has a biblical stance on key modern/social issues of the day. It is important to find out what the church believes about these issues. Do they hold to what scripture says about such subjects? Can they defend their position by properly using the Bible?

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**Location:** Consider practical factors such as the church's location. Is it in reasonable proximity to your home? As you witness to your friends and neighbors is the church close enough to invite others to come?

By listing your priorities, you'll have a clearer understanding of what you're looking for in a new church. It will make it easier to evaluate potential options when you begin visiting different congregations.

### **3. List Preferences**

It is helpful to list your preferences when searching for a new church.

**Worship Style:** Reflect on your preferred worship style. Are you drawn to traditional hymns, contemporary praise and worship, or a blend of both? As you consider worship style understand that singing praises to God is about focusing on God. This should transcend worship styles. It doesn't mean you cannot have your preference, just be aware that the music is about God and not you.

**Children & Youth:** Assess the quality and availability of discipleship opportunities for your children. Are there opportunities for them to learn and grow in their faith? This doesn't mean the church needs to have a children's or youth

ministry. Do not shy away from churches that don't have children's or youth programming. The question to ask is how are the children/youth incorporated and a part of the church?

**Church Size:** Like programs, the size of the church should not be a priority. The size of the church is irrelevant to where God wants you to worship and serve. What one should consider is evangelism. Is the church evangelizing the community? Do they have a plan to plant more churches once they get to a predefined size?

Listing your preferences alongside your priorities. This will help you narrow down your search for where God wants to plant you.

#### **4. Website/Livestream/Social Media**

Take advantage of the digital resources available. Learn more about the community and its offerings. This will be helpful before you physically visiting a church.

**Church Website:** Start by visiting the church's official website. Look for sections that provide information about their beliefs, mission, and values. Explore details about their services, ministries, and upcoming

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events. Use the website to see the church's statement of faith. If the church doesn't post this on their website you should attain a copy of it from the church leadership. This statement of faith should state what they believe about who God is, the authority of the Holy Bible, and the gospel. The website should also include the vision and direction of the church. The vision should include how the church evangelizes, disciples, fellowships, prays and worships. The website may also indicate what denomination, if any, the church is affiliated with. The denomination the church is affiliated with may give a greater understanding of what the church believes and how it does ministry.

**Livestream Services:** Many churches offer livestream services. Take the opportunity to tune in to a livestream service to get a feel for the worship style and preaching. Pay attention to the accuracy and clarity of the sermon. Are the sermons Biblically sound?

**Social Media Pages:** Check out the church's social media pages on platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Threads, Youtube or X). Social media can provide a glimpse into the church's ongoing activities and community engagement. Look for posts about recent events, testimonials from members, and opportunities to get involved. Engage with the content by liking, commenting, or asking questions to get a sense of the church's

online presence and responsiveness.

Visiting the church's website, livestream, and social media pages allows you to gather valuable information and insights before attending in person. It can help you determine if the church aligns with Biblical priorities, making your physical visit more focused and informed.



# Visiting the Church

## 1. Ask questions of the pastor and elders

Visiting a church for the first time can be an enlightening experience. But it is essential to go beyond the surface and gain deeper insights into the church's values, beliefs, and community dynamics. One of the most effective ways to do this is by asking questions and observing the church. Here's how you can engage with the pastor, elders, and congregants to gather valuable information:

**Schedule a Meeting:** Reach out to the pastor or church office to schedule a meeting to discuss your questions. This allows for a focused conversation where you can delve into specific topics in depth.

**Ask About Beliefs and Doctrine:** Inquire about the church's core beliefs and doctrinal statements. What is their stance on key theological issues such as salvation, the authority of Scripture, and the nature of God? Understanding the church's theological foundation is crucial in determining if it aligns with Scripture.

**Learn About the Church's Vision and Mission:** Seek clarity on the church's vision



for ministry and its mission in the local community and beyond. What are the church's priorities in evangelism, discipleship, and serving others? Understanding the church's overarching goals can give you insight into its values and priorities.

**Explore Opportunities for Involvement:** Ask about opportunities for involvement and service within the church. Is there ministry and discipleship opportunity? Understanding how you can contribute to the life of the church can help you feel more connected and engaged.

**Inquire About Community Dynamics:** Ask about the demographics and culture of the church community. How does the church foster a sense of belonging and unity among its members?

**Seek Testimonials from Congregants:** Connect with other members of the church. Ask them about their experiences and journey with the community. What drew them to the church, and what keeps them engaged and committed? Hearing firsthand accounts from congregants can provide valuable insights into the church's strengths and areas for growth.

By asking thoughtful questions and engaging in meaningful conversations with church leadership

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and congregants, you can gain a deeper understanding of the church's identity, mission, and culture. This insight will empower you to make an informed decision about whether the church is where God wants you to be planted.

## **2. Observe the Church and the Community's Response**

Visiting a church goes beyond what is said in conversation. It is also about observing the church in action and gauging the response of the surrounding community. Here's how you can effectively observe both:

**Church Atmosphere:** Pay attention to the atmosphere and environment of the church during services and events. Notice the level of warmth and hospitality extended to newcomers. Are people greeted warmly? Is there a sense of genuine friendliness and inclusivity among the congregation?

**Worship Experience:** Observe the worship experience, including the participation of the congregation. What is the overall atmosphere of reverence and engagement? Do you feel a sense of honoring God during the worship service?

**Community Engagement:** Take note of the church's involvement in the local community. Are there outreach ministries? How does the church demonstrate its commitment to serving others? Is it a positive influence in the neighborhood?

**Congregational Dynamics:** Observe the interactions and relationships among members of the congregation. Do you notice a sense of unity and camaraderie among the church? Are there opportunities for fellowship and connection? Pay attention to how the congregation interacts with one another. It can give you insights into the overall health and vibrancy of the church community.

**Community Perception:** Consider the church's reputation and perception within the broader community. What do local residents, businesses, and community leaders say about the church? Is it seen as a respected and valued institution that positively impacts the community? Or are there concerns or criticisms that need to be addressed? What is the church's reputation with other churches in the community?

By actively observing the church and its interaction with the surrounding community, you can gain valuable insights into its character, values, and impact. These observations,

combined with other aspects such as personal conversations and doctrinal correctness, will help you make a well-informed decision about whether the church is where God wants to plant you.



# Post-Visit to the Church

## 1. Listen to the Holy Spirit

After visiting a church and engaging with its community, it is essential to take time to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Here's how you can tune in to God's guidance in the decision-making process:

**Quiet Reflection:** Set aside quiet time to reflect on your experience visiting the church. Find a peaceful environment where you can pray, meditate, and listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Allow yourself to be open and receptive to any impressions or insights that come to mind.

**Discernment through Prayer:** Continue to seek God's guidance through prayer. Ask Him for clarity and discernment in making your decision. Trust that the Holy Spirit will guide you and lead you in the right direction.

**Confirmation:** Pay attention to any signs or confirmations that reaffirm your sense of direction. This could come through scripture readings, sermons, or conversations with trusted mentors or friends. It could also come through a sense of peace and assurance in your spirit. Look for alignment between what

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you sense the Holy Spirit is saying and the practical considerations you've explored.

**Wisdom in Decision-Making:** Seek wisdom and counsel from wise and spiritually mature individuals. They may offer perspective and insight. Share your thoughts and impressions with trusted mentors, pastors, or friends. Seek their input as you weigh your options and make your decision.

**Discuss with your Household:** Talk with each member of your household. First, discuss with your spouse, sharing each other's experiences and what you both sense from God. Next have a family discussion, sharing each other's experience and what you all are sensing from God.

**Trust in God's Guidance:** Ultimately, trust in God's guidance and sovereignty throughout the decision-making process. Trust that God knows the desires of your heart and is leading you according to His perfect plan. Surrender your will to His and trust that He will direct your steps in the right direction.

By listening to the Holy Spirit and seeking God's guidance, you can have confidence that you are making a decision that aligns with His will for your life. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you as



you discern where God is calling you to worship and serve within a church community.



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## First Four Months at the New Church

So now you decided to stay at this new church. The process is not done yet. Take the next four months to get to know the church.

### 1. Get to Know People of the Church

During the initial phase of becoming a part of a new church community, it is crucial to invest time and effort into getting to know the people who make up the congregation. Here are some ways to facilitate meaningful connections:

**Attend Fellowship Opportunities:** Take advantage of fellowship opportunities offered by the church. Seek out coffee times, potlucks, or small group gatherings. These informal settings provide opportunities to engage in conversation. They also help to build relationships with fellow church members in a relaxed and welcoming environment.

**Participate in Ministry Activities:** Get involved in ministry activities and service opportunities within the church. Whether it's volunteering for a service project, joining a ministry team, or participating in a discipleship group, these activities provide avenues for connecting with others. It is a great way to be involved with others who share similar interests and passions for serving God and others.

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**Reach Out and Initiate Conversations:** Take the initiative to introduce yourself and strike up conversations with other church members. Be intentional about building relationships by expressing genuine interest in others' lives and sharing interests. Spend time with these people outside of the weekly worship gathering/service.

**Attend Social Events and Gatherings:** Attend social events and gatherings hosted by the church. These events provide opportunities for casual interaction and bonding with fellow Christians.

**Seek Discipleship:** Seek spiritually mature Christian(s) within the church who can offer guidance, support, and encouragement as you grow in your faith. Building relationships with more mature believers can provide valuable insights and perspectives.

Investing time and effort into getting to know the people of the church fosters a sense of belonging and community. It will enrich your overall church experience and deepening your connection to the church family. By building meaningful relationships with fellow believers, you'll find support and encouragement as you continue to discern God's leading in your decision-making process.

## 2. Sit in on a Church Business Meeting

Attending a church business meeting can offer valuable insights into the governance, decision-making processes, and health of the church. Here's why sitting in on such a meeting can be beneficial:

**Transparency and Accountability:** Church business meetings often provide transparency into the administrative and financial matters of the church. By observing the discussions and decisions made during these meetings, you can gain a better understanding of how the church is managed and governed.

**Community Engagement:** Attending a church business meeting demonstrates your commitment to actively engage in the life of the church and participate in its decision-making processes. Pay attention to how decisions are made, how conflicts are addressed, and how communication flows within the church community. This can help you assess whether the church operates with transparency and a spirit of unity.

**Insight into Church Dynamics:** Sitting in on a business meeting can provide insight into the dynamics and culture of the church leadership team and congregation.

**Opportunity to Ask Questions:** Business meetings often provide a forum for members to ask questions and seek clarification on various church-related matters. Take advantage of this opportunity to raise any questions you may have about the church's direction, vision, or policies. Engaging in constructive dialogue can foster mutual understanding within the church community.

Attending a church business meeting can provide valuable insights and perspectives as you continue to evaluate your connection to the church and discern God's leading in your decision-making process. It offers an opportunity to engage with the church leadership and congregation in a meaningful way, contributing to your overall understanding of the church's mission, values, and governance.

### **3. Getting Connected and Involved**

Now that you've discerned that the church is where God has planted you, it's time to take proactive steps to get connected and involved in the life of the church community. Here's a guide on how to do just that:

**Attend New Member Orientation:** Many churches offer new member orientation or classes designed to help newcomers. Here you may learn more about the church's history, beliefs, ministries, and opportunities for involvement. Attend these sessions to gain a deeper understanding of the church's identity and mission and to connect with other new members. If you do not know if the church offers such an orientation ask the pastor about your interest in attending such an event.

**Missional community:** missional communities within the church provide an excellent opportunity to build relationships with fellow believers, grow in your faith, and study God's Word together. Explore the various missional communities offered by the church and join one.

**Serve in a Ministry or Volunteer Role:** Identify your spiritual gifts, talents, and passions. Seek out opportunities to serve in a ministry or volunteer role within the church. Find a way to contribute your time and talents to the work of the kingdom. **Note: do not be involved in formal leadership for at least one year to give you the opportunity to see how the church functions.**

**Attend Church Events and Activities:** Participate in church events, activities, and gatherings outside of regular worship services.



Whether it's a fellowship dinner, a community outreach event, a service project, or a special celebration. Make an effort to attend and engage with the church community in various settings.

**Intentional Discipleship:** Seek out a mature Christian to disciple you in a discipleship group or one-to-one. Here you can receive guidance, support, and accountability in your spiritual growth journey. Seek spiritually mature Christian(s) within the church who can offer guidance, support, and encouragement as you grow in your faith. Building relationships with more mature believers can provide valuable insights and perspectives.

**Be Intentional in Building Relationships:** Take the initiative to build relationships with fellow church members. Reach out, initiate conversations, and invite others to connect outside of church gatherings. Cultivate a spirit of hospitality, generosity, and kindness as you seek to love and serve others within the church community.

## Final Thoughts

Finding a new church is a significant decision. It requires careful discernment, prayerful consideration, and active engagement. Throughout this guide, we've explored the various stages of the church-finding process.

As you navigate the journey of finding and settling into a new church, remember that God is with you every step of the way. Trust in His guidance, seek His wisdom, and rely on the support and encouragement of the church community. Finding the right church is about finding a church family where God wants to plant you.

May this guide empower you to make a God-directed decision. May you find joy, fulfillment, and purpose as you journey with God and His people in faith.





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