

WHEN THERE IS DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE CHURCH

Everyone associated with a true, New Testament Baptist church has experienced some degree of disappointment. It is the result of unfulfilled expectations. The higher the expectations rise, the deeper the disappointment.

Except for our immediate families, there is no other institution or gathering of individuals in which we place higher expectations than in the Body of Christ. Therefore, the church is a place where there is tremendous potential for deep disappointment.

About disappointment:

* **The 1-11-55 Principle rules.** On average, everyone who is disgruntled with a church shares it with 11 people, who share it with five more. So anytime someone is deeply disappointed by a church, there are about 55 people who take a low view of that church, most of whom have never attended there.

* **Many disappointments are silly.** Some people have left a church because the music was too loud, the sanctuary too cold, they didn't get the public recognition they thought they deserved, or they had a need that they never let the pastor know about.

* **Pastors are cited as the most frequent cause of disappointment.** We often place unrealistic demands on their character and performance.

Solutions to disappointment:

* **Have realistic expectations for your pastor.** Most people want their pastor to be successful even though the definition is vague and not clearly communicated. With shared leadership of a common vision from God, a pastor must be a consensus maker, not a consensus taker.

* **The church is the result of the intersection of the divine and the human.** It is a group of human beings filled with the Spirit of God. God chose to place His perfection in chipped, cracked, weak people - jars of clay. The hurts, sins, and regrets of our past do not preclude us from being the dwelling place of God.

* **Accept our responsibility.** When church members use their disappointment as an excuse to be unfaithful to Jesus Christ, they are shirking their responsibility to God. If our church disappoints us, we should get it worked out with the pastor or someone else involved. DON'T QUIT!!

* **Don't allow our disappointment to distract the church.** The mission of the church can be changed by one or two people willing to make enough noise until they get their way. Our disappointment must not alter the God-given mission of the church.

* **We see what we look for.** If we are looking for disappointment or flaws, we will find them: in the pastor, the music, and any one of the programs. If we are looking for sinners, we'll find them because the church welcomes them with open arms. But if we look for the life-changing presence of the Holy Spirit, that is what we will find.

* **Make a decision.** Decide to love the church. We won't agree with everyone or everything that is done. But love is a decision.