

# The Consumer Mentality in the Church

America is a consumer culture. We need something; we buy it. And we'll shop around for the best quality at the best price.

Christians do the same thing in the church.



Odds are pretty good that you live in an area where at least two evangelical churches are close to you. I live in the Nashville area, and you can't throw a rock and not hit a church. (For the record, I do not endorse throwing rocks at churches.)

I feel like half the church planting in America happens in Nashville. After all it's hip, cool, and trendy to live here, so a lot of wannabe pastors start a church here.

I'm glad we have ample opportunities to get plugged in with a group of believers. But most of us do not make that connection with the closest church to us—at least not at first. We shop around.

I'd like to think we're looking for a church that is focused solely on serving Christ and living according to His Word. While that might be a small part of it, a bigger factor is at play.

## What's in it for me?

We shop for a church with a good children's ministry, student ministry, or active senior adult group. We shop based on our music preferences. Do they have a choir and music program for me? Do they have a Starbucks kiosk? Do they have ...?

And the list goes on. We choose a church based on the personal perks we gain.

Churches should strive to do their work with excellence, but I get the impression we're not doing so to reach the lost; we're often doing it to entice Christians to choose our church over the one down the street. Church leaders—and church members—would probably deny that, but ask them why they drive past six other churches each Sunday to attend the one they do. We choose a church because of what it has to offer us.

I know. I've done it.

Yet what happens when the leadership changes? Maybe the style of music changed or we don't like the new student minister as much as we liked the previous one. Any number of things can cause us dissatisfaction, and the dissatisfaction can cause us to go shopping again. After all, we need a church that meets *our* needs!

God calls us to a wholly different mindset. His Word is silent about perks and preferences, but it says a lot about our role in the body of Christ. Let me rewrite John F. Kennedy's statement.

*Ask not what your church can do for you; ask what you can do for your church.*

Life in the church is not centered around me. It is centered around Christ. He is my Master and Lord, and I am to follow His lead and serve others. Consider these words from Peter to the church—and note what we are called to do.

*The end of all things is near. Therefore **be alert** and of sober mind so that you may **pray**. Above all, **love each other deeply**, because love covers over a multitude of sins. **Offer hospitality** to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to **serve others**, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. (1 Pet. 4:7-10).*

Pray. Love. Be hospitable. Serve. All active verbs focused on what I am to do, not passive verbs about what should be done for me.



I go to a far-from-perfect church. Give me an hour and I could tell what I don't like about this or that in our services, or the programs and areas in the church I would do differently. I *could* do that, but I won't. My church is doing nothing unbiblical—far from it—and my "disagreements" come down to my preferences and own way of doing things.

And one reason my church is far from perfect is because I am a part of the church family.

So I will stay right where I am, choosing to serve Christ by serving His body. Pray. Love. Be hospitable. Serve.

Join me in this. Stop whining and start serving.