

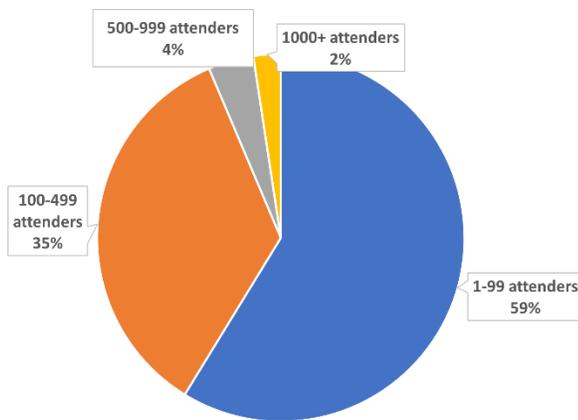
In Praise of the Small Church

In the circles I run in and the news feeds I follow, I'm continually hearing about this mega-church and that mega-church. I'm glad God is using the 4,000-seat worship centers, artificial lakes, food courts, coffee houses, and rock-climbing walls of these large-scale churches for His kingdom, but ...

America has somewhere between 300,000 to 400,000 churches. Of those churches:

- Less than three percent (2.41%) have a thousand people or more.
- Almost 60% of churches have less than 100 attenders.
- Thirty-five percent of churches run between 100 and 500 attenders.

So for all the attention mega-churches receive, 94% of believers go to churches with less than 500 people!



If you attend a larger (i.e., mega) church) and it helps you grow in Christ and gives you a way to serve His kingdom, great. Keep at it.

If you attend a smaller church and it helps you grow in Christ and gives you a way to serve His kingdom, great. Keep at it—but don't let anyone tell you that your church experience is any less rich, meaningful, or productive than that of believers in the large church.

The smaller church is certainly no less significant in God's eyes or in His kingdom. Take the church in Philadelphia for example. Through the apostle John, Jesus delivered separate messages to seven churches, including the one in Philadelphia. None of these first-century churches would be deemed mega churches by our 21st century standards, especially the church in Philadelphia. The city itself was relatively small, and I'm sure the same could be said for the church.

But size didn't matter, and the church in Philadelphia was highly commended by Christ (Rev. 3:7-13). Of the seven churches in Revelation 2-3, none received greater praise than this small church—and it was likely the smallest of the bunch! Jesus *knew* them. They were serving Christ and serving Him well. That's what mattered!

A smaller church may feel lost in the shadow of the larger church next door, but it is not overlooked by Jesus. He says, "I know your works." The smaller church is no less significant in the kingdom of God. God uses different churches to reach different people, and the church that averages 25 people reaches people and touches lives that the church that averages 2500 never will. And vice versa.

I could devote space to pointing out the advantages and challenges of both large and small churches, but that's not my purpose. I'm not here to "sell" one church over another. I have an affinity for the smaller church, but I have been blessed and benefited from my time in the larger, even mega, church. Instead, I want to shout out that God is at work in the smaller church.

I love the smaller church. And I'm not alone. God loves the smaller church too.

"I know your works. Look, I have placed before you an open door that no one can close because you have but little power; yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name" (v. 8).