



We begin today with a survey on what you expect a church to be. The following are some of the responses: *safe haven, loving, engaging, community, open-minded, transforming, accountable, hospital, holy, great, God-led, fellowship, a place to meet your spouse, selfless, united, safe-place, and welcoming—which is the heart of the responses.*

One of the reasons I asked such a vague question is because the question of what a church is supposed to be is a very broad question. It's one of those things where nothing really defines how to answer that question because it boils down to the expectation that we each have for a church.

- A lot of Christians that we run into today, or those who come to this church, claim to have gone through what is known as “church hurt.” My goal is for us to get to the root of understanding since a lot of us were hurt because we didn’t understand what church was.
- We do not believe that a church purposely tried to hurt us, but we led our church search based on our own expectations. Because of this, it’s not that the fault rests on us, but both parties play a role which results in the hurt.
- When our expectations are not met, the question becomes whether it’s the church’s responsibility to meet our expectations. When speaking with some people outside of our church who come from Christian homes, some of them said that they were hurt because they watched their parents, or how deacons in other churches spoke, or how pastors were not giving them the right sort of attention.

- And a lot of things came up such that sometimes I wonder if it was really the church hurting them, or whether they were in the wrong church, or even the right church with the wrong expectation.
- This is a very complex discussion because there are a lot of reasons why hurt arises. The Bible says that basically if we're here [in church together], there will be some offenses; offense stems from just hanging out together. If there are two people in the room, there's a possibility of one person annoying the other.
- Therefore, offense is part of human nature. Initially, we are excited to be in a new place; however, as time goes on, we get to the point where it no longer works for us because our expectations were not met. Often, running away from conflict seems like the best option for some.
- Therefore, I'd like to discuss what church is all about, how you know you're in the right place, and whether it's time to go, or time to stay. This will be discussed over the next two to three weeks.
- Today, we will discuss the place of a church, the responsibility of a church, how a church is supposed to act, and how to identify whether a church is acting the way it's supposed to but it is still hurting you. Whenever you see a person's expectation that it's supposed to be a place of grace—such as “welcoming, God-led, accountable, truthful, happy place, etc.”—how do you define this?

At what point are we allowed to be ourselves if it no longer feels welcoming?

John 2:23-24

²³Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, **many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.** ²⁴**But Jesus did not commit Himself to them,** because He knew all men,

- They were celebrating the fact that death had passed over and He was the Passover Lamb; but He was there at the Passover.
- As a pastor, this is one of the verses that convinces me that a church—or being a leader or a pastor—doesn't always mean that everyone should be accepted into the fold, or that you're supposed to pour 100% of your time into building people before they are even ready to be built.
- Though these people in Jerusalem now believed in Jesus, He did not commit Himself to them because He knew all men. In fact, other versions of the Bible say that He didn't trust them; so, He didn't give Himself to them because He knew them.
- In fact, in ministry, you'll see that Jesus did not begin building people because they believed in Him. He realized that if He started to build people before they were ready, it was going to hurt them.
- For example, there's the story about the young ruler in the Bible who wanted to follow Jesus but turned away sad when Jesus told Him that the first requirement was to sell all his things. He was hurt from that first request.

- Jesus did not want the young ruler to be rich while following Him, so he turned away sad. Therefore, Jesus did not commit Himself to people who weren't truly ready to commit to Him. So, as a pastor, I have a 3-month rule to determine whether I should be committing myself to you as well.
- Now, this may be contradictory to what some of us think, especially for those who think that the church is like a hospital. However, like a physician cannot prescribe medication until they diagnose you, the church is not able to get into a person's problem to address them immediately—you would hurt the person when you have not diagnosed why they are there.
- So, for those of us who are trying to go into ministry and who passionately want to save, help, and deliver, remember that the Bible says that if you cast out a demon at the wrong time, seven demons will return—and the person becomes worse than before.
- It would have been much better had you left them that way so that the seven demons would not affect them. We hurt each other unknowingly by trying to do good at the wrong time; good things done at the wrong time will destroy you.
- Such as sex before marriage—sex was a gift that was not supposed to be unpacked before marriage. Good things will destroy what you have before time.
- So, Jesus did not just commit Himself to people because He knew that His standard was too high. He says that you must deny yourself first because if you haven't denied yourself, His request will instantly hurt you; it will make you sad because you have an expectation, as does God.
- When God brings you to a church or to a place, He's bringing you so that you can cast your expectations at His feet, and then He has a safe place for you to be given a new identity. Church starts to hurt when you refuse to let go of what you came in with.
- Church hurts in many ways; sometimes it's not the church that hurt you, it's God who sent you there. He chastises those He loves—that's supposed to hurt.
- Because the whole idea of a church is that it is a movement that when it started, was not just a local church; a local church is part of a bigger movement with God heading it in a certain direction.
- The reason you join a church is because God showed you the place that would watch over your soul as you join a movement towards His coming. Therefore, a church is not where you get to express your own vision for yourself.
- A church is where God gave a direction for that zip code and location; and if He put you there, you are now part of the movement that gets there. Therefore, if your own Savior didn't just commit Himself but also gave time to test your motives, you must learn to do the same.
- You must give people enough time to reveal themselves to you. Some of us have deceived ourselves to the point where the ministry is carrying the burdens of people, but we don't do it right because we do it out of season; we do it at the wrong time and the wrong way.
- There are those who haven't studied people, and yet they jump into relationships claiming that the Lord showed [the relationship] to them in a dream. So, they befriend and become best friends overnight, then later find themselves saying, "I didn't know that about them."

- The question is, did you study them? Jesus told us to love, but did you see how Jesus loved? Sometimes He loved from a distance so that He would not be hurt by people who were not ready to follow Him.
- I also don't buy into the theology of some who say, "That's why I stay on my own; I don't like people." That's a bigger problem. We're just saying to engage people with wisdom.

Church
ekklesia
ek (out from and to)
kaleo (to call)
Gathering, Assembly, Congregation

The "ek" is to come out from and "kaleo" is to head towards. By combining these two words, you're coming from and heading towards something. The idea of a church in the Bible is *ekklesia*: people who are called out of the world and are heading towards the Kingdom of God.

What is a church?

Those who are on the move towards the Kingdom of God; it is a bunch of people who have been called out and heard God say, "Come out from where you are, and head to where you need to be."

- FGM Valley is a part of the collective of the body of Christ (the *ekklesia*); so, when I speak of our church, I am speaking of Christians as a whole. It is a gathering, assembly, and a congregation—as you will see in the following quoted scripture:

Matthew 16:18

¹⁸And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

- Here, Jesus is doing a play on words; Peter's name meant "rock" in its original form. Therefore, Jesus is saying that, "On this rock, I will build My church." Even though some may say that Jesus was speaking of Himself, it is difficult to conclude that when Peter's name is actually "Rock," and He leaves him as a leader of the foundation of the church.
- Although it is built on you [the rock] as the lead, it is Jesus who does the building. The way the body of Christ looks is Jesus' responsibility; therefore, when we say that the body of Christ is not looking right, it may be that the body is not following the head—who is Jesus.
- For every single church that you see that is called by the name of Jesus and is doing what it's supposed to be doing, it is Jesus who is building it all by Himself. It is not built by the pastor, nor is it built by an algorithm—it is Jesus all by Himself.
- Humans try to interrupt this process by gauging church performance by the number of its members or by tithes and offerings. No, the Bible tells us that the church truly is such that Jesus is building it all by Himself, and that the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

- The reason this is important is because if you recall the seven churches in Revelation, though they were minding their own business, God was sending report cards all the time. This is evidence that although He's building the bigger church (the body of Christ), He is too involved in the local churches.
- This means that as He's building the body of Christ, He is very involved in the small local churches as well; and He builds the bigger body by paying attention to what every single church is doing.
- And He responds to every single church based on what they do. So, God is involved with FGGM Valley all the time! Therefore, as a leader, God is constantly talking to me about the health of the church.
- He speaks to me about what I let go this week that I shouldn't have, what I did too much that I shouldn't have done, what I need to do in six months, or what it is that was neglected three months ago that will affect us seven months from now. God is constantly talking about it.

Why?

Because the church is His home/His house, He is responsible for the well-being of the church. This means that the reason a church exists is not the pastor's imperative to come up with.

- The reason FGGM Valley exists is not because of me [the pastor]. The leadership does not decide things. If it is His house, He determines what it is supposed to do, the direction it is supposed to go in, and how it is supposed to function.
- The job of a pastor is to hear the directives of where the church is going; and if a person is a member, they are supposed to subscribe to the journey of where the church is going. Where your church is going is where you're going.
- If your church is going nowhere, you're going nowhere. This is the reason that I give you the vision of the church every six months or so, because I like to let you know that we're heading somewhere.
- The day I stop telling you where we're going is the day I stop seeing; and when your pastor stops seeing, *you* no longer see. You don't go anywhere because your church is responsible for your soul.
- For example, if we are doing a lot of functionality and are coming up with a lot of visions for ourselves, yet are not able to tell how this impacts the Kingdom of God, then although we may be highly functional, we may not necessarily be getting results for the Kingdom of God. There's a difference.
- If the vision does not correlate with how [or where] the Kingdom is supposed to be heading from and to, then we're not heading anywhere—even if our name becomes great. And if we as a church are not heading anywhere in the realm of the spirit, then you are absolutely going nowhere.
- For this reason, the church you attend is very important. This is the reason for our Bible study, our prayer sessions, and our random declarations of fasting wherein we wake up at 6 am for prayer.

- We do this because we are on the move in the realm of the spirit, and my job is to see what the roadblocks are. Our job is to fight so that we can appear where we need to. It's like when Bianca told us that she heard the voice of the Lord come in her room and tell her to open the book of Isaiah.
- This is also the reason for all the dreams we're having wherein we're asking, "What is going on with me?" Just know that if all of this was not happening, it would mean that we are not going fast enough.
- You guys are experiencing something called spiritual warfare, you're experiencing spiritual heavens opening, you're experiencing God speaking, you're experiencing dreams, and you're hearing the voice of God—that's how you know that we are heading somewhere. That's how you know you're growing.
- If we did Sunday to Sunday living comfortably from Monday to Saturday—and it's only my message that probes you on Sunday, and then on Monday we're back—trust me, we are not going anywhere. I can grow all that I want; but if you're not growing, then I as a pastor am not going anywhere.
- The health of my ministry is not determined by how I pray—it's how *we* pray. Even if I can enter the realm of the spirit and dead bodies rise [in my presence], if the church is not at that level, then the church is dead. When I stand before God, there will be no reward for any dead body I raised because the health of the church is what determines if I did my job.
- This is the reason for my pursuing you: I will get my reward. I will not be broke in heaven—I've already done it down here [**smiles**].
- Therefore, Jesus is a big part of how the church looks; and if Jesus is a big part of how the church looks, then one of the things I'd like to show you is how the apostles had a standard of being such that I don't think we'd have many churches if they were still here today.
- I know that we're supposed to be like a hospital where people come in sick and then they leave healed, and we're supposed to be tending to people's issues. However, back in the day, if you were called from and you were going to [i.e., *ekklesia*], the Bible expected that when you received Jesus, you had a certain level of discipline that you came to church with.
- Let's review the kind of stuff that they dealt with. As soon as sin arose, they dealt with it like in 1 Corinthians 5:1-2:

1 Corinthians 5:1-2:

⁵It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!

²And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.

- Back in the day, if it was determined that you slept with someone who wasn't your spouse, you were supposed to get kicked out of the church because your sin could affect the rest of us [the congregation].
- In other words, like it says in the Bible, if one person is sinning and all of us are praying together, none of our prayers will reach heaven. This is the reason the Bible says that you

are your brother's keeper; if you see nonsense, you are supposed to call out the nonsense because our prayers depend on it. I honestly believe that God is extra graceful these days because as the Bible says, *a little leaven leavens the entire bread*.

- This means that if the angel of the Lord comes to bless us on Sunday and there is unholiness in the realm of the spirit sticking out like a sore thumb, the first person who is asked about it in the realm of the spirit is me.
- If I can feel like the place is not moving forward, then the question I'll be asking is, "What is happening?" and the Spirit of God might say, "There is sin in the camp." The Old Testament says that God killed almost the entire army of Israel because one person decided to take an idol home.
- They found it and dealt with that person—they killed him, his entire family, and all his children. They wiped out his entire lineage, and then they said, "God is God." This is a foreshadowing of the New Testament—when Ananias and Sapphira lied to themselves, and God killed them in public because He was trying to instill the fear of God in the church.
- The reason we don't see the power of God is because everyone is practicing independent living.
- And by the way, the man quoted in this verse [above] decided to sleep with his stepmother, and the church knew about it, and they did nothing about it. He [Paul] says, "And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned..." So, instead of you to come before God and say, "Father, we are sorry these things are happening amongst us," [you have not mourned].
- Then he says, "...he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you." If you notice, he didn't say, "Sit down with him and talk to him." The Bible is saying that if the person has enough sense to take the grace of God for granted, he doesn't need to be there.

Here's another example where Jesus is talking to the church:

Matthew 18:15-17:

¹⁵ "Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'

- Like when you come to church and there is tension between you and someone else, if you both are talking and the person is not open, then don't stop there—take two people with you. Now you're a nuisance because you're bringing other people to the problem. Go to them and say, "You did offend me, so you must say that you're sorry."
- Two people are watching; if they say, "I will never say sorry to you," then the Bible gives you a third option:

¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

- You'll discover that the church is the final authority by God; what the church declares is supposed to stick. The church has the ability to tell you that you will not enter heaven. You

won't because you acted like a heathen; and [back then] heathens were like tax collectors who were considered scum that you wouldn't touch because you believed that you would be dirty.

Who said this?

"If they refuse to repent, hand them over to Satan so that Satan will buffet their flesh that their soul may be saved." [1 Corinthians 5:5]

- Paul gave instruction to the church saying that if you as a pastor see a sinner who refuses to repent and keeps going back to their sin, bring them to the front of the church, gather the elders and pray for the person: "In the name of Jesus, from now on you are handed to Satan and whatever Satan does, we agree and it will stick on you, in Jesus' name, Amen."
- The Bible says God will unleash Satan on that person to eat their body enough for them to repent, so that their soul still makes it to heaven if they die. This lets you know of the power of the church when it comes to things that can hurt a person.
- Church is not just a hospital and a haven for imperfect people. If we were to go back to the way church used to be, you'd be "hurt-hurt." Now, every person who comes to church has a context; they came from somewhere.
- People came from where they were hurt. Some people came from households where they were loved by their mother and father, while others may not have.

Context

Everyone who comes to church has a context, and this is important to understand because context creates:

1. Expectation (Corinthians, Simon)

- **Church decides** (to conform or not): The church must decide to conform to your expectation or not—this is the bedrock of hurt in a church. When you believe that God brought you somewhere, you have expectations based on your context; and a church must decide whether it will conform to it.
- When a church decides not to conform to your context, you feel like you were betrayed by the church and that they were not taking your context into consideration. Possibly, God sent you to the church because of your context, and He doesn't want you constantly living in the expectation of your context.

Examples of Context:

Paul wrote a lot to the Corinthians because they were basically having sex in public. They had a female goddess on display, and whenever you visited Corinth, the first thing you encountered was the female goddess—a huge statue.

- It was the colony of Rome, and there were thousands of female priestesses (so there were women who were the priests in Corinth). Because of this, part of their worship became such that people would sleep with [the priestesses] as a form of sacrifice.
- Things were just wonderful [to the people]; but when Paul visited, they became Christians and came into Christianity with the context of women leading with power while the men were subservient to them.
- The first thing you'll see in a church with women of power is the gift of prophesy. They began prophesying against each other, and then Paul came in and told all the women to sit quietly.
- Here is an example of the church deciding not to conform to their context. If a person loves the context of Corinth but doesn't like the decision of the church, this is the bedrock for church hurt: "The church did not let me rise as a woman; therefore, I left."
- The church made that decision because God determines the order of church. Although there was a context and an expectation, God decided otherwise—which is why Paul had to keep writing to them to stop all the idolatry.

Simon

Simon's context was that of a witch doctor who made a lot of money from witchcraft and sorcery. When the gospel of Jesus came, he lost his power (which was his source of income). So, as he saw the apostles perform miracles, he came into Christianity with the context of power.

From the world and to a church

To become what it is

Why does that church exist? (Not HOW DO I PERFECT MY CALLING?)

- When he came into Christianity, his context was of the power he had, and the church decided not to conform. He had approached them with praise, and he offered to give them money to help him become powerful again.
- The apostles did not treat this situation hospitably. They rebuked him on the spot saying, "Let your money perish with you," which means, "Go to hell with your money." This is how church used to be. Church hurt.
- And he had a reason to be hurt because they could have just told him no, but they looked at it as something serious. Simon should have deduced that it was God performing the miracles, not the apostles; but he wanted to use money to corrupt them.
- Back then, they cut to the chase. They were direct; therefore, you had better use your brain! Jesus did this to Peter when he told Jesus that He was not going to die, and Jesus said, "Get thee behind Me Satan!" Though Peter came in love, Jesus corrected him on the spot.

- Church is being called from the world to be heading towards the Church [body of Christ]. So, whenever you find yourself in a church, what are you saying in the realm of the spirit when you are in church?
- You're saying, "I didn't choose this church; God led me to this church." Because if you choose [it] yourself, that would mean that you also choose what God is doing with you. If you are led, then you are following God as He knows what is best in order for you to become.
- Therefore, you are not "it" if God is sending you to it. This is important because if God is sending you to a church, it is for you to become what it is—you become one with that church. God will not send you to a church already made for you not to fit in, but to tell it what to do.
- Church is where God gives an instruction for it to head somewhere; so, whoever God placed as the leader of that church is whom He is speaking to about the directive of that church. Therefore, if you join that church, you are submitting yourself to the directive that God has told the shepherd about where to go.
- So, if you come into a church, the first thing you must understand is that God is sending you there because He has given instructions on where that church should be; and your job is to fit in and to instrument that church on how it needs to get there.
- This generation is asking, "How do I perfect my calling?" rather than, "Why does this church exist?" If you approach a church based on what it can do for you, what you're asking is for the church to change what God told it to do in order to take care of you.
- When for you, you become the most important member of that church, that's when you stop fitting in. This is how people get hurt: when they come to a church and it's about how that man or woman of God is going to help them get to where they need to be.
- The man or woman of God over a church is only responsible for what God has said, not your calling. Where you're going to go is not the responsibility of the pastor to figure out; it is for God to reveal to the pastor that it is time to cater to that. Until God has done so, it is not the pastor's business to be worried about your calling. Because if God is sending you to that place, then wherever the pastor is going is what will help you get there.
- However, if you make your calling the focus, the church will hurt you because the church is never supposed to confirm a person's desire of getting to a destination. They are only supposed to be concerned with God taking that church towards the destination. If you truly fit in, your calling will make sense in and of itself over time when you have submitted yourself to the journey that brings you to your calling.
- The journey is what gives expression to your calling; it is not that the man or woman of God gives you time to do it. [**Gives an example of when he met Wale**]
- If you approach the pastor regarding your vision of what you are supposed to do, you are not submitting to the vision of the church—that's why church hurt happens. When you approach with your title, then whatever the church is doing, you are not submitted to it until it caters to your expectations.

- Because if I am truly your pastor, then I should know when the time is right, and I should know what the Lord told me about [your calling]. I should know. This is where trust comes in because it's the job of the church to know.
- However, if you say, "No, I am going to be in charge of when the Lord tells me it's time," then you don't need me to be here because you've done my job for me. So, your being in a church is not for you to feel like you are heading somewhere in your calling; it is for you to fit into a calling and help take [the church] to where it needs to be—then your calling will find expression there.
- This is what it means not to exalt yourself because God will find others to do so. When you don't push it, you'll find that that's when God pushes it. Before joining a church, the first question you should ask is why it exists because that is what God will hold you responsible for doing.
- Now, there are two options I can take [as a pastor]: I can come from the perspective of membership hunger, or I can stick to what God told me it is. I believe a lot of churches are hurting today because they allow people to come and tell them what their calling is or what context they stand on and what they want to do.
- Pastors may make promises to help or teach people how to be based on whatever their context is (such as anointing, etc.), which is a lie if God has not charged them to do so. And to make promises that you will make a person into what they are looking for is to negate that the reason for church is not to just be graduating people in the giftings of God; it is supposed to be that they carry the church to where it needs to be.
- So, be weary of anyone who comes with the promise of power as if that is the reason the church exists. God has a mission for a church; and when you join the church, it is to get to that mission.

Acts 4:32-35:

³²Now the multitude of **those who believed** were of **one heart** and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, **but they had all things in common.** ³³And with **great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection** of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. ³⁴**Nor was there anyone among them who lacked;** for all who were possessors of land or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, ³⁵and laid *them* at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

This is important because the goal of a church is stated above in verse 32. God is saying for a church to exist, they must be of one heart and one soul. We can't be rallying around your calling—it must be around what God told the church to be.

- So, a church cannot be a church if it is not one heart and one soul; and the rallying point is what God says the church is, not your calling. Because if you're about your calling, and the church is about something else, then you're not united.

“Neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.” No one was trying to stand out. “³³And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.”

“³⁴Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of land or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, ³⁵and laid *them* at the apostles’ feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.”

- Everyone bought into the vision of the church so much that they wanted everyone to be equal; so, theirs was not just in the spirit realm, it was also in the physical realm. This is what a church is supposed to be. So, when a pastor sees a person who really wants to stand out, looking at their gifting is not the first thing that the pastor looks at. Rather, they say, “Look at this nuisance.”
- Because every single church is held by this verse [above]. If God walked into a church and asked, “What is the evidence that this church is working?” He would see that this church is working in that everyone bought into a vision and no one is trying to stand out above anyone else.
- Because we want all things in common, and the commonality is what this church exists for. As you can see, church hurt happens when you feel like the church is not catering to you—and that’s because it’s catering to itself.
- Therefore, if you are truly a part of it, then you would feel like the church is catering to you. This is the reason some of us don’t like mega churches because we’d feel lost; but a lot of reasons people feel lost is because they want access to the pastor.
- When you want access to the pastor, then it’s [about] me and what God said to me. Some of the mega churches that I’ve visited have programs which help you find you. Eventually, we too will be a mega church.

The following is an example from the Bible on how it works when people come with expectations; but God has expectations for the church on how the church is supposed to handle it, how it can lead to church hurt, and at the same time, how wisdom can ensue:

Acts 6:1-5:

¹Now in those days, when the *number* of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, **because their widows were neglected in the daily distributions.** ²Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “**It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.**” ³Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; ⁴but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

⁵And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nacanon, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch,

By the way, the apostles thought that Jesus would return before they died. In fact, Paul did not change his tone until he realized that Jesus wasn't [yet returning], once others began dying. Before that, Paul's words were "He's coming now," and afterwards, it was "before He comes." Nonetheless, they lived ready.

In Acts 6, it shows a problem that started happening because when they sold everything, they created a community; and then the church began growing too big, and problems began.

- As the disciples were multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, and this was a racial problem. Hebrew people started offering food but neglected the Hellenists (the Hellenists were Greek-speaking Jews, or the Greeks).
- Suddenly, Hebrew people were neglecting the widows of the Greeks in their daily distribution. Jews felt they were too holy to be walking with Greeks in church, and this was a problem.
- Some of us may fix this problem by coming down on them or by diverting the attention of the ministry to now start serving the widows. However, they did not say that they needed to change the strategy of the church because the church is not just meant to take care of the needy and sick people; the assignment of the church is to obey the Lord.

They came together and said, **"It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables."**

- They knew there was a problem, but they were not changing strategy because they knew that had they changed strategy, they were not following God to begin with. So, your problem is not going to change who we are; we're just going to assess how we're going to deal with it. Then they said:

³Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, **full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;**

- We're going to keep doing what we were doing. We're not changing tactics because of the complaint; we're going to be ourselves, and we're just going to appoint somebody else. Church hurt can occur when the person who did the complaining was targeting the eldership and the leadership to change its course in order to begin solving their problems.

⁴**but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."**

- "Only the pastor can talk to me, only the leadership can do this..." They said the leadership is not even going to focus on this, but we'll assign the ushers to take care of that situation.
- The expectation people come to church with determines whether they get hurt or not, and that is important because the church has been given the responsibility by God to only focus on obeying His word—no matter the type of struggle that arises.

- If a church stops focusing on the word of God and starts focusing on problems, it'll lose its identity. So, people get hurt because they think the church should be focusing on things that God did not tell it to do, even though it may mean making room to solve those types of problems.
- One of the biggest problems wherein people end up getting hurt is when their expectation doesn't line up with what God told them to do. That's when people start getting hurt. The first thing you want to do before you join a church is ask these questions:
 - What does it stand for?
 - What is it here to do?
 - Where is it going?
 - Can I fit into it?

If you don't know any of these answers, especially the last one, I promise you you'll be hurt because you'll never feel that the church caters to you. Find out why you're where you are.