



OPEN DOOR CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Mid Week Message

Gather... Connect... Grow... Impact!

MARCH 17, 2022

What's in a name? EVERYTHING!

One of the reasons for referring to ourselves as “Disciples” instead of “Church Members” has to do with the role we play in Christ’s church.

Members join groups, pays dues, and are given a set of rights and privileges that non-members do not receive. For example...Arcy and I became members of a wine club downtown. We pay a fee and every month we receive a bottle of wine of our choice, access to a private lounge separate from the tasting room, and special invitations to “members only” events (This Sunday there is a brunch from 1:00-3:00). I’m sure the brunch is as pricey as the wine, but it pays the bills, which is why we have members!

Though the church was not intended to have this form of members, the connection is still very strong. Members come with expectations; not on themselves, but expectations placed on the organization they joined.

In my 35 years of ministry, I have heard my share of expectations given by members about “their” church (as opposed to Christ’s Church). Expectations include seating preference in worship (to the point of asking people to move), control over the style and music in worship, voting, the right to take casserole dishes home (seriously), keys to the building, the right to lead a movement to fire the preacher, the right to lead a movement to get one’s own way (actually had a few families start a petition to move the choir seats to a new location in the sanctuary), the right to make rules for others to follow – but not them, of course (my personal favorite), and the right to act a fool in board or congregational meetings.

Pleasing members becomes the end game for the church that is measured by the numbers on the back of the bulletin. If the numbers are good, the preacher is doing a good job of making members happy. If the numbers are slipping...well...time for a better preacher.

Being a Disciple of Jesus Christ is a completely different mindset. **A Disciple is someone who has moved from being the RECIPIENT of the church’s mission to being RESPONSIBLE for the church’s mission.**

This explains why we spent over a year recapturing the church’s mission and our place in it. To be a part of the church means all of us go through a two-step process that repeats itself until death do us part:

1. We mature in our faith (**worship openly and intentionally, study Scripture in small groups so we can gain knowledge and understanding, and practice silence with the art of listening to God in prayer and meditation**) and then
2. Take our place in the church’s mission (**sharing our gifts for ministry, sharing the resources God has given us, and sharing our faith story that expresses the joy of living a life of Christ**)

Saint Francis of Assisi wrote, “For it is in giving that we receive.” It is hard for members to understand this logic. But every disciple knows its power and joy!

Danny

*Red letters represent the Seven Element of our Faith