

Finding a Good Church (3)

by Anton Bosch

Starting a home church requires a genuine desire for fellowship and a willingness to follow the Lord's guidance, while avoiding the pitfalls of wrong motives and false leadership.

Scripture: Matthew 18:20, Acts 2:42, 1 Corinthians 14:26, Hebrews 10:24

Topics: "Church Leadership", "Home Fellowship"

Description

Anton Bosch emphasizes the importance of having the right motives when considering starting a home church, cautioning against selfish reasons like seeking recognition or avoiding accountability. He advises against following books that promote house churches with skewed perspectives and encourages meeting with like-minded believers for genuine fellowship and mutual ministry. Bosch stresses the need for commitment, correction of false teachings, and reliance on the Holy Spirit and the Word for guidance and teaching within the home church setting. He also highlights the significance of structure, leadership as servanthood, and seeking God's will before embarking on this journey.

Transcript

So, you have checked your attitude and expectations and have looked at every possible church within a reasonable distance and come up empty? If you have truly exhausted every possibility then there is still one more possibility - a home church.

But before we talk about how to do that, you need to make absolutely sure that your motives for doing this are correct. The large majority of home churches are started for the wrong reasons. Some do not feel that they were being recognized in the formal church, others rebel against authority and accountability, others want to be free of the responsibility to and commitment of regular fellowship and others want to escape the irritation of other people who do not behave as they would like them to.

If you are motivated by anything except a genuine absence of a good church and a sincere desire to be in fellowship - the venture will eventually be shipwrecked. Every problem you faced in dealing with people in a larger church are amplified when there are only a few meeting in a living room. The smaller the group, the more intensely we become aware of other's shortcomings and the more pressure there is on each one to be fully committed. When there are only four of you, there is no place to hide and the meetings are dependant on each one being present. So be sure that you can handle this level of intensity, intimacy and commitment.

The next thing to do is to avoid all the books out there that claim to have the formula for a house church. All those books are written by people who have a grudge against the formal church and so their perspective is very skewed by their own bitterness and hurt. Most of the authors and traveling house church gurus are looking for a platform for their own egos. I have examined many of those books and cannot recommend a single one. Be especially wary of anyone who claims that the only legitimate form of church is the house church because that is a lie from hell. Churches in the New Testament met in houses but they also met in synagogues (Acts 13:14), in the temple (Acts 2:46), in public places (Acts 18:28, 20:20), in the open air (Acts 16:13) and in large houses with rooms that had been especially equipped to accommodate larger numbers of worshippers (Acts 19:9, 20:8).

Now you need to find one or more other believers or families who are likeminded. Agree to meet together in order to minister to one another, to shepherd one another, to break bread, to pray and to teach / be taught (Acts 2:42). Don't try to follow the liturgy and formality of a large church. Be real. Sit in a circle. If anyone wants people to sit in rows and wants to bring a pulpit then rebuke him sharply. This is not a miniature version of those who meet under a steeple.

Commit to one another. Do not become exclusive and try to keep the group to a select few - accept all who are true disciples, but at the same time, keep the group pure by correcting and ultimately rejecting those who want to take over, control or manipulate the group, bring in false teachings or carnal wisdom and fleshly worship. Who gives you the authority to do this? Mathew 18 does. Notice that church discipline lies in the hands of the two or three with the Lord Jesus in the midst.

Who will teach you? The Holy Spirit will, through the Word. Stick to the Word, encourage, teach, admonish, comfort and build one another up by diligent reading, teaching and application of the Word. Find brothers who are pure in doctrine and motive who can share with you from time to time, seek their council and advice, but do not become dependant on them but become dependant on the Lord, His Word and His Spirit. You may occasionally use tapes or video's but ultimately, each one must learn to spend time in the Word and to come to the meeting with something to share. "How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification" (1Corinthians 14:26).

"But I don't know any one I could meet with like this". Well you better find someone and if they are not saved already, then preach the gospel to them and make them disciples - not of yourself, but of the Lord Jesus Christ. Go from door to door if necessary, speak to others you think are also disillusioned with what they don't have and share this vision with them. I can assure you, in every town and city there are many others who are crying out for fellowship based on reality and truth. Just find them and begin to meet. You don't need a thousand, you just need two or three families.

If you have already read some of the books on house churches, allow me to warn you not to believe them when they say you should not have any structure or leaders. Many house churches refuse to have any structure so they don't even meet regularly on the same day every week. They claim they are led by "the spirit" but actually, they are led by the flesh. Set regular days and times to meet and stick to them. Human beings need that order and discipline and it is within the very nature of God to do things orderly and within a set pattern.

To claim that leadership in such a group is bad is heresy. The New Testament is clear that every church, no matter how small, had leaders. BUT, those leaders are servants to, and not lords over, the church. If

the group is being led by the Lord, everyone will recognize true leaders from false ones who are power-hungry. (This is a huge subject. The book *Building Blocks of the Church* deals with this in much detail). True leaders will empower each member of the group to discover and develop their unique ministry. False leaders will want to be the center of attention.

Finally, be sure this is what the Lord wants. If so, it can be a wonderful and exciting adventure. If not it will be a painful lesson. Don't barge into it lightly but spend much time in prayer and in seeking God's will.

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25).

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