

## Faith Fight Podcast - How to Find a Good Church Home

Belonging to a good church is extremely important to your growth as a Christian. A good church will cause you to grow closer to God, allow you to be supported by other believers when you need it and give you an opportunity to serve others through different ministries in the church.

*The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. - Psalms 92:12-13*

Palm trees are known for their long life. To flourish like a palm tree means to stand tall and live long regardless of the storms that come. The cedars of Lebanon grew to 120 feet in height and up to 30 feet in circumference. So they were solid, strong and immovable. The psalmist saw believers as upright, strong, and unmovable when they are planted in the house of the Lord.

*Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. - Galatians 6:9-10*

Paul was challenging the Galatians to keep on doing Good and to trust God for the results. In due time there will be a harvest of blessings. Similarly, if you are considering to join a church, see if its members strive to treat each other well and do good to each other. This is a good indication that the church members care for the well-being of other.

*Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. - Hebrews 10:25 ESV*

When you are not planted in a church, you don't have the benefit of encouragement and help from other Christians. We gather together to share our faith and to strengthen each other in the Lord. The church that you join should contribute positively to your spiritual growth.

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. - John 15:5-8*

When you are abiding in Christ, you will inevitably grow stronger as a Christian. A key to this is learning about the teachings of Jesus from the bible through your pastor. You can use how much you are growing spiritually to determine if you found the right church.

*As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse! - **Galatians 1:9***

Paul strongly denounced the distortion of the gospel of Christ. He also said in 2 Corinthians that Satan masquerades as an angel of light. The message and the truth of the gospel should never change. Be alert that the gospel preached to you in any church is not a false gospel.

*"If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. - **Matthew 18:15-17***

This is one of the benefits of being planted in a Church. If there is an issue or if someone sins against you, You can follow these steps to deal with the issue. The steps identified in these verses involve other church members to try and help you overcome the issue. Another benefit of belonging to a church can be found in the next verses as well

*"Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." - **Matthew 18:19-20***

When there is agreement it is powerful. When believers, filled with the Holy Spirit come together to pray God's will their request will be granted. This again is one of the benefits found when you are planted in a church body.

*Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. - **1 John 4:1-3***

"Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirit means that we shouldn't believe everything we hear just because someone says it is inspired by God. There are many ways to test to see if someone's words are from God. You can see if what they say lines up with scripture and also, you can look at the fruit of their lifestyle. The best test that you can use is if they teach about Jesus is fully God and came to earth to save us. If the answer to that question is no, then they are not teaching a true gospel.

*Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." - **John 4:23-24***

It is not where you worship that counts but if our worship is genuine and true. Do you feel the Holy Spirit present when you enter a worship service at a church. The worship ministry in churches are filled

with very talented people and if they were selected correctly by a spiritually mature pastor then the worship service is pure. But sometimes ego and pride may creep into the heart of the worship leader and though the worship may sound good to the ears, the spirit of God is not there.

*So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?" He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:*

*"These people honor me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me.*

*They worship me in vain;*

*their teachings are merely human rules.'*

*You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions."* – **Mark 7:6-8**

Hypocrisy is pretending to be something you are not. Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites because their worship was not motivated by love, but by a desire to attain profit, appear holy, and increase their status. When people pay more attention to reputation rather than character, follow religious practices without connecting their hearts to God or boast in their virtues but call out the sins of others, they are acting hypocritically. Be sure to look out for this when you are searching for a church to be planted.

## **Weekly Prayer Plan – How to Find a Good Church Home**

### **How to Use this Template:**

Download and save this document to begin using at the beginning (Monday) of every week. Every Week will have different bible verses to meditate on based on the Faith Fight Podcast episode topic for that week. Determine the time and place that you will devote to prayer. The below structure is set for one hour and is only used as a guide. You can adjust your timing if necessary.

**Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Place:** \_\_\_\_\_

5 min – Drawing Near To God

5 min – Confession

10 min – God-Centered Petitions

10 min – Intercessory Prayer

10 min – Personal Petitions

15 min – Meditation

5 min – Praise, Thanksgiving & Closing

1. **DRAWING NEAR TO GOD** - Matt. 6:9 “This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name”

*God the Father is the focus of all our prayers. We should never forget what a privilege it is to bend our knees on earth and reach almighty God in heaven.*

2. **CONFESSION** - Matt. 6:12 “Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us”

*When we repent and forgive others, we maintain fellowship with God. But if we hold grudges, that fellowship is broken. God loves to answer our prayers when the lines of communication are not disrupted.*

3. **GOD CENTERED PETITIONS** Matt 6:10 “Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.”

*Prayer should reflect a desire to align ourselves with God’s goals and purposes, not to get Him to follow our plans.*

4. **PERSONAL PETITIONS** Matt 6:11 “Give us today our daily bread.”

*We are dependent upon the Lord for our needs and He wants us to come to Him with our requests.*

5. **MEDITATION** Joshua 1:8 “Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”

*Meditation is thinking about the word of God to understand what it means in the context of the scripture and how it can apply to your life today. The Word of God is powerful enough to still be relevant in your life today even though it was written thousands of years ago.*

**Read through the scripture passages for today as listed below:**

Meditational Verses

Monday: ***Psalms 92***

Tuesday: ***Galatians 6:1-10***

Wednesday: ***1 John 4:1-6***

Thursday: ***Galatians 1:6-10***

Friday: ***Genesis 12:1-4***

Saturday: ***Mark 7:1-23***

Sunday: ***John 4:1-26***

**Once you have read the scripture for today, write down your answer to the questions below or any other insight/revelation that you receive in your prayer journal.**

1. Is there a promise to claim?
2. Is there a lesson to learn?
3. Is there a blessing to enjoy?
4. Is there a command to obey?
5. Is there a sin to avoid?
6. Is there a new thought to carry with me?

6. **PRAISE & THANKSGIVING** **1 John 5:14-15** “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.”

*We can end our prayer time with confidence that God has heard our prayer and will answer in His perfect timing. Demonstrate your faith in Him by showing thanks before you see the answer to your prayers.*