

## Church Going Downhill?

Jim Elliff

Was your church meeting disappointing this week? Do you find that there seems to be little life in the church? Are there troubles stirring? Are there way too many parking lot conversations? What can you do as a member to make things better?



Here are a few suggestions:

1. Have you considered what prayer might do? Divide up the church names and pray for some of the members each day. Pray diligently, begging God for the needs that you can detect. Don't underestimate prayer. God can do what you will never be able to accomplish on your own.
2. Be hospitable Ask people each Sunday to come to your home for a meal. Let these couple of families bring some of the food to make it possible. Don't try to be fancy, but just provide an outlet for people to show love to each other. Encourage other people to do the same. Bring families and singles together who don't normally spend time with each other.
3. Arrive early to greet everyone there. Don't sit down until each person has been greeted warmly. Try to have some meaningful discussion with some. I'm always amazed at what just a few people can do by taking responsibility in this way.
4. Meet with the pastor(s) and find out how you can help the church become what God wants it to be. Be eager to help. Offer your time.
5. If someone comes to you to point out the weaknesses of others, don't listen. Rather, lovingly encourage that person to go to the offending party to get things talked out. Unresolved friction is alike an arctic blast to a church.

6. Don't quit until you're dead. Never say, "I'll let the young people do it." God may shift you to another responsibility, but don't let it be because you are slowing down. Continue to play an active part. If some of the parts of your body still work, use them to serve God and his church.

7. Don't wait until some leader assigns you a ministry, rather, create your ministry and get to work. Don't expect everyone to take up your cause, but do something that will help the church or reach out to others that doesn't compete with other regular ministries. Go to the nursing home, disciple younger people, start a prayer group, start a Bible reading group, begin a Bible study at work or at the local hangout. You get the idea.

8. Finally, replace gossip with the giving of thanks. Be a person who always has something wonderful to thank God for. Speak well of your church.

I have observed the effects one or two people can have on their church. It always stuns me, but it is true that just a few can make such a difference.