

Five Myths That Weaken the Church

Small Group Study — Sunrise Baptist Church

Key Texts: Acts 7:48; 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Matthew 18:15–20; Acts 2:42; James 1:2–4; John 16:33; 2 Corinthians 9:1–7; Acts 11:29

Key Thoughts

1. **You are the temple.** Stephen died declaring that God does not dwell in buildings (Acts 7:48). Through the torn veil and the indwelling Spirit, every believer is now the dwelling place of God (1 Cor. 3:16). We do not “go to” church—we are the church, deployed when the service ends.
2. **Presence is not tied to a quorum.** Matthew 18:20 is not a promise that God “shows up” when enough people gather; it is Christ’s assurance that He backs the church’s judicial authority in discipline. God is omnipresent—as near in your car as in a stadium.
3. **The gathering is the locker room, not the field.** The Sunday assembly exists to coach and equip believers (Acts 2:42), not to water down truth for the comfort of the unbeliever. The world is the field where the game is played.
4. **Suffering is the design, not the malfunction.** The popular slogan twists 1 Corinthians 10:13 (about temptation) into a promise about suffering. Scripture says the opposite: God gives us more than we can handle so we stop relying on ourselves (2 Cor. 1:8–9; James 1:2–4).
5. **Generosity replaced the tithe.** Paul deliberately swaps “dekate” (tenth) for “charis” (grace-gift). The New Testament standard is not a percentage but purposeful, proportionate generosity—and keeping the promises we make (Matt. 5:37; 2 Cor. 9:7).

Discussion Questions

1. Read Acts 7:48, 1 Peter 2:5, and 1 Corinthians 3:16. If believers are the temple, how should that change the way we think about what happens after we leave the church building on Sunday?

2. In Matthew 18:15–20, Jesus gives the church authority to act in discipline. How does understanding the real context of “where two or three are gathered” protect us from superstitious thinking about God’s presence?

3. The sermon described the Sunday gathering as the “locker room” and the world as the “field.” What happens to a church that treats the locker room like the field? What truths are we tempted to soften for the sake of comfort?

4. James 1:2–4 and John 16:33 promise trials, not immunity from them. Share a season when suffering crushed your self-reliance and drove you to deeper dependence on Christ.
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5. Paul held the Corinthians to the financial promise they had already made (2 Cor. 9:1–5). How does linking generosity to integrity (“Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’”) change the way you think about giving?
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6. Personal: Which of the five misconceptions has most shaped your own expectations of church or God? What is one concrete step you can take this week to align your thinking with the scriptural reality?
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Applications

1. **Carry the church with you.** This week, identify one moment each day when you can consciously act as the temple of God—extend grace, speak truth, or serve someone—outside any church building.
2. **Replace self-reliance with surrender.** Write down the burden that feels “too much.” Bring it to Christ in prayer using Matthew 11:28–30, and ask one trusted believer to pray with you about it.
3. **Honor your word in generosity.** Review any commitments you have made—financial or otherwise—to the body. Follow through on one this week as an act of purposeful generosity (2 Cor. 9:7).

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that You do not dwell in temples made with hands but have made Your home inside every believer through the Holy Spirit. Forgive us for shrinking Your presence to a building, a headcount, or a comfortable gathering. Forgive us for expecting immunity from suffering when You promised purpose in it, and for treating generosity as an obligation rather than a grace. Teach us to carry the church wherever we go, to depend on Christ when life overwhelms us, and to keep our word with cheerful, sacrificial hearts. Build Your church—not with bricks but with living stones—for Your glory alone. In Jesus’ name, amen.