

WHY CONGREGATIONS FAIL
Text: Rev. 2:5; 3:1-2; 14-17

INTRO: Did you ever drive down the street in an unfamiliar town & see an abandoned church building? Grass & weeds knee deep? Windows boarded up? And wonder why that church had failed?

But there is another kind of failure that we are more interested in. The church in Sardis appeared to be successful. It was only in God's estimation that they were failing. The church in Laodicea seemed to be successful. But in God's estimation they were a dismal failure & in danger of being rejected altogether.

Let us look briefly, somewhat rapidly, at some areas in which we must be alert to avoid their mistakes. What are some of the things that will cause churches to fail to meet with God's approval?

I. LACK OR SHORTAGE OF FAITH. Heb. 11:6.

There is but one source to obtain faith & but one source to nourish that faith, Rom. 10:17. Social programs won't do it. Pep talks won't do it. Promotions & ballyhoo won't do it. Human schemes & dreams won't do it. When churches emphasize social programs & give little emphasis to Spiritual matters, they are set on a course that will assure failure somewhere down the road.

II. CHURCH MEMBERS BECOME TOO WORLDLY MINDED.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 JN 2:15)

Social drinking, recreational use of drugs, immodest apparel, shady business deals, shoddy workmanship, worldly ambition: power, prestige, popularity, laxity in behavior & language... When our influence for good diminishes, the cause of Christ suffers. Titus 2:11-12

And the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, & the desire for other things entering in choke the word, & it becomes unfruitful. (Mk 4:19)

III. TOO MUCH LUKEWARMNESS, UNCONCERN. Rev. 3:15-16; Luke 11:23.

IV. CHRISTIANS FAILING TO GIVE AS THEY PROSPER. 1 Cor 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7.

V. NOT ENOUGH PRAYING.

1 Tim. 2:8, men pray everywhere
1 Thess. 5:17, pray without ceasing
Luke 18:1, men always ought to pray
Eph. 6:18, praying always with all prayer & sup.
Js 5:16, confess trespasses & pray for 1 another

VI. ASSEMBLIES ARE FORSAKEN. Heb. 10:24-26.

A. Regular attendance in public worship strengthens us in several ways. Word is read & discussed. See zeal & determination of others & take heart.

B. Some would deny that they have "quit the church, "but if they did, we probably wouldn't be able to tell the difference.

C. Even those with legitimate reasons for missing services will not be as strong Spiritually as if they were able to attend more frequently. Those who could attend regularly but choose not to already display a degree of Spiritual weakness, & by choice they perpetuate that weakness when they could be building their faith.

VII. HOMES BECOME UNGODLY. Husbands & fathers not set proper example, not respected. Women want to be liberated from their God-given roles. Children rule the home. Steady diet of worldly entertainment. Never study together. Not see that children prepare their lessons for Bible class. Never attend gospel meetings out of town.

VIII. NOT ENOUGH LOVE. JOHN 3:16; 1 JOHN 4:11; 1 JOHN 3:14; 1 PET 1:22

IX. PREACHING HAS BEEN CENSORED. SOMETIMES BY THE PREACHER HIMSELF.

Acts 20:20, kept back nothing profitable
Acts 20:27, not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God.
2 Tim. 4:2, preach the word...

X. GOD HAS NOT BEEN PUT FIRST, MT 10:37-38; MT 6:33.

CONCLUSION: As we seek to grow numerically--and we do seek numerical growth--we must not lose sight of the

things that will inevitably determine our success or failure as a congregation of God's people. A church can be numerically strong & materially rich, and still be a dismal failure in the eyes of the God to whom we will someday give an account.

Cox Springs, TX, September 4, 1963
Liberty Hill, TX, October 11, 1964
Jonestown, TX, November 5, 1967
Springhill, LA, March 5, 1972
KBSF Radio, Springhill, LA, August 18, 1974
La Porte, TX, August 1, 1976
Cedar Park, TX, June 5, 1977 (meeting)
Exton, PA, February 17, 1991
Shiloh, Mexia, TX, September 25, 1994