

# Eight Warning Signs Your Church is Drifting from God's Mission

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God's mission is clear: He seeks and saves the lost. Therefore churches should be intentionally gospel-centered, intentionally evangelistic, and intentionally seek justice. A church excited about the gospel is a church with a laser focus on making disciples. Churches with purpose pour collective energy into one direction.

Churches without purpose tend to drift. Like the flotsam and jetsam in the sea, a church adrift does little more than float along as aimless debris. I have yet to see a church drift *towards* God's mission. The current of apathy always pulls *away*. It's obvious to point out drifting churches as lacking purpose. But what causes this drift? What are some early warning signs of an unraveling in a congregation? Let's look at eight practical indicators.

**The chatter is all about people and not Jesus.** Not all chatter is **gossip**. People talk—it's part of being human. Conversations in the church can be about any number of things. Not all of them are bad. However, when people start talking about themselves without any mention of Christ, your church is not only drifting, the congregation is dangerously inward.

**You no longer celebrate God's mission in a worship service.** When people go, the church should celebrate. When God sends, the church should erupt in praise. A lack of a celebratory spirit over God's mission is one indication a church is drifting.

**The percentage given to missions out of the budget is shrinking.** One clear way to determine a church's priorities is the budget. If your church is giving less and less to missions each year, then it is likely drifting

**Church leaders do not speak about the lostness of the nations.** Do your church leaders call attention to the billions that don't know Christ? Is your church broken over people who have never heard the gospel? Worse yet, sometimes church leaders rant and rail against other nations as if they don't deserve the gospel. Mission drift often occurs when people believe cross-cultural sending doesn't apply to their congregation.

**New believers are perceived as disturbing the peace of the body.** If a small group or Bible class would rather not deal with the messiness of assimilating a new believer, then it's drifting from God's mission. The messiness of new believers should be seen as God's beautiful work, not as a disturbance to the status quo.

**There is more of a focus on the older generation than the younger generation.** All generations are important. In fact, a church full of just one generation—*young or old*—is disobedient. Every church is called outward to reach others unlike those already there. However, the reality is most people are saved at a younger age, not older. The church should resource the ministries with the greatest fruit. Additionally, children don't often get to voice their preferences or concerns. Therefore, sometimes in churches, the older generation's concerns trumps that of the

younger generation. A church drifts when the older generation is willing to sacrifice the souls of the younger generation in order to cling to their preferences.

**Few care about the persecuted church.** Your church should be acutely aware of what is **currently happening** to Christians all over the globe. And your people should be praying. Often.

**It takes more to win less.** It is possible for a church to grow numerically and do less kingdom work. People can gather for worship while personal evangelism is drying up in their lives. Praying for lost friends does not happen haphazardly. Sharing your faith is not accidental. When a church grows numerically while having fewer conversions, it's potentially drifting without purpose.

No church is perfect. No person bats 1.000 spiritually. Everyone will drift at some point. Every church will struggle for a season with finding a purpose. The problem comes when people seek the status quo rather than seeking the lost. The problem is exacerbated when whole churches become comfortable drifting.