

Church Expectations: A community that connects us

We rightly long for churches which help us love the Lord and provide supportive fellowship. We have great expectations of what the Church should be, but we experience many frustrations with what it is. Sometimes, going along feels like a chore. Looking at the Book of Acts, we will ask what we should realistically expect from our churches and what that means for our walk with the Lord.

Lamorna Ash, author of ‘Don’t Forget We’re Here Forever’

“My sense was that Church affords you with a community and routine and ritual & the importance of ritual repeated. Trying to get through the difficulties of life to me felt like I could do that better if I had a space I went to once a week among people of all different ages where I could sing with them, where I could hear sermons, where people are really trying to wrestle with the bible and all sorts of different poems that people were bringing in each week. The same way that someone else might find mindfulness or meditation or going on a run every day, I found this space had tremendous value for me. And again, sure you don't need God, and I met loads of atheist Quakers who still go there because there is something about routine ritual, trying to be one bodied in a space once a week, where you think about how you are living altogether has innate value, whether or not you believe in God.”

Podcast, Best of the Spectator ‘The Book Club: Why are Gen Z turning to Christianity?’ 23 April 2025

Why go to Church?

What is good about Church?

Psalm 84

Hebrews 3:12-13

Hebrews 10:23-25

Psalm 133

Our desire for community

Acts 2:41-47

Acts 4:32

‘On innumerable occasions, a whole Christian community has been shattered because it has lived on the basis of a wishful image. Certainly, serious Christians who are put in a community for the first time will often bring with them a very definite image of what Christian communal life should be, and they will be anxious to realise it. But God's grace quickly frustrates all such dreams. A great disillusionment with others, with Christians in general, and, if we are fortunate, with ourselves, is bound to overwhelm us as surely as God desires to lead us to an understanding of genuine Christian community. By sheer grace, God will not permit us to live in a dream world for even a few weeks... The sooner this moment of disillusionment comes over the individual and the community, the better for both.’

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: *Life Together*

What should an ordinary church be like?

4 key elements

A learning Church
A loving Church
A Worshipping Church
A Witnessing Church

1. A learning Church

Acts 4:1-3

Acts 4:23-31

Acts 5:12-14

Acts 5:17-21

Acts 8:1-3

Acts 11:19-21

2. A loving church

3. A worshipping church -

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4. A witnessing church

What is normal church experience?