

Influence Ministries

I LOVE MY CHURCH

LESSON 1

TITLE: INTENTIONALLY LOVE THE CHURCH.

Projected Aim: To introduce the concept that loving the church means loving the people.

John 13:34-35 –ERV

"I give you a new command: Love each other. You must love each other just as I loved you. All people will know that you are my followers if you love each other."

There are different places, locations, buildings that we eventually must visit in life.

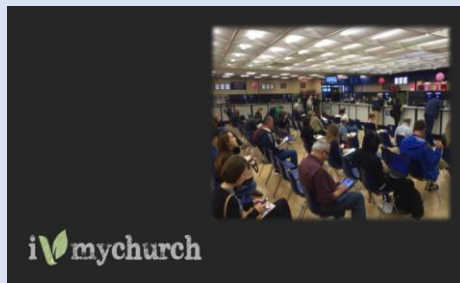
I'm not talking about Disneyland, that's a "want to" visit place.

I'm talking about the places we need to go to just because of the course of life: school, the dentist's office.

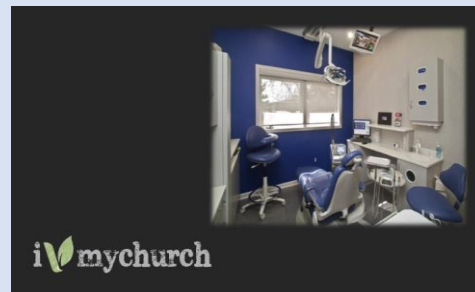
Various necessary places will invoke a variety of responses in us. We feel different about going to the mall compared to say going to the dentist.

I'm going to put an image of a place up on the screen, and I want you to say the first word that comes to mind about how people typically feel regarding having to go to these locations. Give me a word.

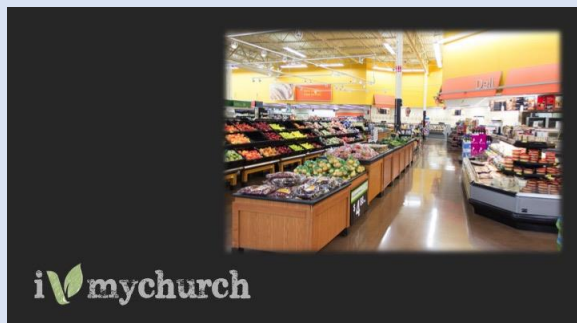
DMV



Dentist office



Grocery store



Influence Ministries

In all three of them you can see that we go to these places in most cases because we must, not necessarily because we want to.

What about this picture:

Church



Do we think about church the same way we think about going to the DMV, the Dentist office, or the grocery store?

Is this just a place that we feel we “have” to go to or is there more to it?

Think about people who aren’t here today or maybe people who haven’t stepped into a church in a long time or ever.

I’m guessing that some of them would describe coming to church like we describe going to the DMV.

Is that what God intended when He created the church?

Was that His idea about this community of people?

I believe the Bible tells us that no, that wasn’t nor is God’s plan for the church.

I believe that God wants us to love the church as He intended it to be.

That’s what this series is going to be about—that we’d learn to be the community God intended us to be.

John 13:34-35 –ERV

“I give you a new command: Love each other. You must love each other just as I loved you. All people will know that you are my followers if you love each other.”

Church people are meant to love one another. It’s not optional, not an elective—it’s a command from Jesus.

We are to love one another.

What do we mean when we say, “I love my church”? What does it mean to love one another?

Influence Ministries

Many people treat the church like a restaurant. If the experience isn't just to their liking, they'll find somewhere else or not go at all.

This is beyond unfortunate. This sets up expectations for the church that it was never intended to fulfill.

You will experience a love for the church when you intentionally love the church. You will have a deep sense of love for the church when you actively and intentionally practice love for the church.

The opposite is also true: When you don't intentionally love the church, then you will not experience a love for the church.

We'll love the church when it is about relationships, not when it is like a restaurant.

What does it look like to intentionally love the church?

Love by connecting. Being in community—in fellowship, in relationship—with each other.

Love by serving. God has given each of us supernaturally empowered abilities to encourage and help one another and the community.

Love by giving. We'll simply talk about giving as an indicator of love. Give of your time, your finances, your love and actions.

Love by sharing. The love that Jesus gives to us and that we can have for one another isn't to be hoarded within the walls of the church.

I invite you to stick with us for the next few weeks as we look at various ways that we can intentionally love the church as we see what it is God intended for the community of faith.

There are two things I want to challenge you with as we leave:

Let people know that you love your church.

We have these I Love My Church T-shirts available.

Envision these shirts as an easy conversation-starting tool.

Pray for God to give you opportunities to talk to people when they see you with this shirt on, that people would ask about it, inquire which church, wonder why you'd love a church.

Get connected in an I Love My Church group.

We are forming groups that meet midweek for the next 8 weeks that begin this Wednesday.

I want to encourage and challenge you to get into one of these groups.

Incredible growth, connections, and answers to questions can be found when a group of people come together in such a way.

This is going to be an exciting journey—and I'm excited we're able to go through this together.