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I Love Our Culture

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Introduction

A man is rescued after many years on a deserted island. As he stands on the deck of the rescuing vessel, the captain says to him, "I thought you were stranded alone. How come I can see three huts on the beach?" "Well," replies the castaway, "that one there is my house, and that one there is where I go to church." "And the third one?" asks the skipper. "Oh, that's my old church." Like the castaway, many of us have experienced other churches before becoming part of Prairie Lakes Church. Others have made PLC their first church home, the place where they've encountered the love of Christ and fellow believers. No matter how we've arrived, God has a reason for bringing us together to further His work in ourselves and in our communities. When Jesus told Peter how He would build His church in Matthew 16:18-20, He knew this would manifest itself in many local congregations. For PLC, our commitment is to sustain a culture that honors Christ through its vision, strategy and values.

Discussion

Read what Paul says about the local church in **1 Corinthians 12:12-27**, and discuss the following.

1. Jennifer and Heidi are discussing last Sunday's sermon on marriage while waiting to meet Stephanie at Starbucks. Stephanie isn't a believer and has been struggling in her marriage relationship. How can Jennifer and Heidi be invitational without being "preachy" when they talk with Stephanie? What should they say about the marriage sermon?
2. Mike and Steven are working out at the gym when Mike spots his minister running laps around the track. Mike calls Pastor Bob over to introduce him to Steven. Steven, who doesn't have a church home, tells Mike later, "That Pastor Bob seems like a pretty cool guy." How should Mike respond to Steven's comment?
3. Sarah is having lunch in the company cafeteria when she overhears a co-worker, Justin, talking about the church she attends. "Yeah, I heard they show Disney movies on a big screen and then jump into a big bathtub. Then they come out soaking wet and run down the aisles to get their free pizza in the lobby. You wouldn't catch me dead there." How should Sarah respond to Justin and those at his table?

Think About It

In *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense*, N.T. Wright explains the purpose of the church. "The church exists primarily for two closely correlated purposes: to worship God and to work for his kingdom in the world ... The church also exists for a third purpose, which serves the other two: to encourage one another, to build one another up in faith, to pray with and for one another, to learn from one another and teach one another, and to set one another examples to follow, challenges to take up, and urgent tasks to perform. This is all part of what is known loosely as fellowship."

Do Something

1. Read through the purpose of the church in "Think About It" and assess which of these things are being done well by your church. If you don't know enough about what goes on, visit with one of the church staff to learn more. If you learn the church is fulfilling Christ's commands, make a prayerful commitment to get more involved and to support your church and its leadership.
2. The next time that you learn something about your church you're not thrilled about, take it to God in prayer before discussing with anyone. If it remains an issue, then discreetly approach church staff to discuss it in a spirit of Christ's love. Chances are you will be satisfied in the end.