

10 Reasons Business Leaders Reject Their Local Churches

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I have been a pastor for more than 29 years and have ministered to hundreds of pastors and visited numerous churches over the past three decades. During this time, I have noticed often that key marketplace leaders who love the Lord have a hard time connecting to a local church.

Because of this, some in the marketplace have felt compelled to consider their businesses and employees as their local church! In my opinion, this should not be necessary. The following observations are based on interaction with entrepreneurs and business leaders. Here are ten reasons business leaders reject their local churches:

1. The leadership cap of the pastor is less than that of the marketplace leader

One of the greatest shocks I have felt over the years occurred when I realized that not every pastor is a strong leader. I had to learn the difference between a leader and a minister. Every leader is a minister but not every minister is a good leader. By leader I mean someone who knows how to cast vision, strategize on how to go from A to Z, and then galvanize people to get behind that vision. (Successful business leaders and entrepreneurs must constantly put budgets together that match their business plans and then measure their success or failure based on legitimate feedback systems to monitor progress.)

Oftentimes the pastor that a marketplace leader sits under might not have the same level of influence on other people that key business leaders have. Thus, such a business leader will have a hard time respecting their pastor as their leader or overseer. If a business leader is a 7 or 8 out of 10 on the leadership scale, and the pastor is only a 5 or 6, the business leader needs to leave that church and find an apostolic leader of a local church with a leadership level of 9 or 10 who understands how to lead and nurture other entrepreneurs. The only other alternative would be for the business leader to keep his family in a nurturing church and then have an apostolic leader from another region personally coach him or her in their spiritual life.

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2. The financial mismanagement of the tithe

A billionaire once told me that if he gave his full tithe to his local church, it would probably be destroyed by it! The pastor would not know what to do with the tithe because it exceeds the management capacity of the church trustees and pastor. Many business leaders connect to God through order and systems that exhibit excellence, not just emotionally or spiritually. In cases like this, business leaders will give part of their tithe to foundations or nonprofit charities they have created that know how to harness finances much better than their local churches. (Note, however, this is not the best-case scenario and is not necessarily congruent with the storehouse concept of Malachi 3:8-14. Marketplace leaders are sometimes left with no other alternative unless they can find capable apostolic leaders and their ministries, which they can personally sow into.)

3. Not being appreciated as a fellow minister in the kingdom of God

Ephesians 4:10-12 teaches that the main function of the ministry gifts Christ gave the church is to prepare God's people for the work of the ministry. Verse 10 tells us the reason Christ ascended was to "fill all things." Hence, context demands that our definition of preparing the saints for the ministry (verse 12) involves training leaders for every realm of the created order, not just church ministry. When high-level business leaders or emerging leaders are in a local church and their pastor does not treat them as a marketplace minister in the kingdom of God, they will lose interest and leave the church. People only go where their gifts and calling are celebrated.

4. Business leaders are only viewed as a cash cow for the church

Unfortunately, the only value some pastors place on high-level business leaders is that their tithe helps fund the vision of the church. When people feel like they are only being used for their finances, they will eventually leave the church.

5. Pastors do not know how to utilize great marketplace leaders

Pastors need to view potential or actual marketplace leaders as gems in the kingdom of God who have the ability to help bring kingdom vision to pass. Often a pastor will only look to pour into potential preachers, overlooking emerging marketplace leaders in their discipleship process. One of the signs of an apostolic leader is their ability to discern the kingdom leadership callings of those under their care, and then properly place them and minister to them. Marketplace leaders can be successfully trained to lead financial committees, kingdom expansion in regard to the creation of charities, and community development and business ventures that can generate income streams to expand a local church's influence and service capacity. When studying the book of Acts and the New Testament epistles, we see that Paul the Apostle had a group of more than 20 benefactors who were part of his team. Paul knew that he could not be successful in his mission without properly utilizing those called to generate wealth in the marketplace.

6. Not crafting a proper discipleship plan

Marketplace leaders have odd hours, travel frequently and cannot always fit nicely into typical discipleship structures of local churches. For example, they have a hard time fitting into a weekly requirement of attending small groups and sometimes cannot attend Sunday services every week. Pastors who attempt to force marketplace leaders into the mold of the general blue-collar populace will frustrate them and eventually lose them. Discipleship plans need to be personalized with the pastoral expectation of the business leader to prioritize Sunday attendance and small group attendance as best they can. Also, marketplace leaders do not usually need a pastor to give them financial or business advice unless it is dealing with biblical ethics and principles. Pastors should concentrate on the personal and family life of marketplace leaders in their churches. Leaders in high-stress jobs, like those on Wall Street, are often challenged to keep their families in order and their lives properly balanced.

7. Churches often do not have a clear mission and vision

When high-level marketplace leaders participate in any organization, they need to understand the purpose and goals of the organization's existence. Often, the only plans of pastors are for high church attendance and anointed meetings. Sometimes even plans to erect a new building are not enough because there needs to be a reason to fill the building and give financially. Marketplace

leaders are not wired to emotionally connect to organizations (including churches) with no clear vision or goals to accomplish that vision.

8. Sunday services appeal only to the uneducated or those without means

Every local church has a particular subculture that attracts—whether intentional or not—a particular category of people in regard to age, income and ethnicity. Pastors who want to attract successful business leaders need to understand who is attracted by the culture of their church, because culture always trumps both vision and anointing. Pastors need to ask themselves the following questions before they should expect successful business people to attend their churches:

- What is the appearance of the church building, both inside and out? Successful people are attracted to success and repelled by sloppy appearances.
- Is parking available for their expensive cars? Who would want to park their expensive car three blocks away from their local church in an at-risk neighborhood?
- Is there a spirit of excellence exhibited in the way church business is conducted?
- Does the church have a compelling vision?
- How are Sunday service announcements made?
- How are people dressed on Sundays?
- Does the leadership of the church include successful business people?
- Is the preaching condescending or uplifting and motivating? Does it appeal only to the uneducated or also to the educated? Those in a higher economic bracket are usually independent thinkers and cannot be screamed at or only told what to do, unlike former drug addicts or prisoners who come out of strict programs and need to be told what to do, to keep them in line.
- Does the church have a heart for community service in which marketplace leaders' gifts can be utilized?
- Do poorer church members gravitate constantly to successful business leaders for handouts?
- Will poorer church members exhibit resentment towards those who own multiple homes, expensive cars and travel frequently?

9. Biblical preaching is not relevant to their needs

Preaching that is only hype, without practical substance, or preaching what is merely exegetically correct (unpacking the history, culture, original languages, and biblical author's intent) without skillfully applying the text to the felt needs of one's audience will cause marketplace leaders to disconnect from messages that are preached. These leaders are wired to succeed in life and are often under great stress every day to perform at a high professional level. Thus, they need messages that will motivate them to excel and believe for great things and relevant teachings to empower their personal lives, marriages and families.

10. People constantly ask them for handouts

Pastors who want an economically diverse local church need to instruct their leaders and congregations on how to relate to successful people. Often, successful business people will attend a church that attracts other successful people, so they do not stand out from the rest of the congregation (and thus attract those who always have their hands out for money). Secondary leaders in a local church should be the first ones trained on how to interact with key marketplace leaders, since they will often be the first ones "in line" to use their influence in the church to sell an idea or get a handout!

Finally, pastors who desire economically diverse congregations with both the rich and poor feeling welcome must intentionally work on these ten areas if they desire a church subculture that attracts both groups of people.

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