

Dear Mary,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You said that you had been attending a traditional Christian service for about 20 years, where a contemporary service was also offered. Then, suddenly, the service changed to all contemporary. After speaking with the elders, you learned that there will no longer be a traditional service and that contemporary was the direction they chose to go. You and about 80 other members were disturbed since the elders apparently did not consider your feelings. Some members are now going to other churches. Some do not attend a church at all. You wanted to know how you, as a Christian, should feel about this situation and what you should do.

We are sorry that the desire to change the service was not first discussed with all the membership before any action was taken. We believe that the entire congregation should have been informed that the elders were considering a contemporary service, thereby giving everyone a voice in the matter prior to implementation. We believe that elders should make it a point to understand the needs of all their congregants before proceeding with any action. However, the elders in your church did not choose to inform everyone of their decision.

How should you feel? Obviously, you feel disappointed. You have to ask yourself if your church is feeding you the spiritual food you are seeking. If it is not, you have an obligation as a Christian to investigate other churches to see what spiritual food their flocks are receiving and if it is in your best spiritual interest to become a member of one of those churches.

To help you in your quest, it is important to remember the three relationships a pastor or elder should have with his flock. The first relationship is one of shepherding. Just as the shepherd cares for his sheep, the elder should care for the spiritual lives of his flock (Acts 20:28). The second relationship is one of teaching. In order to be a good teacher, the pastor or elder must study the Bible and share his studies with his congregation. He must also know how to counter the acceptance of the lowering of biblical standards so prominent in the world today (2 Peter 3:17-18). The third relationship of the elder to his flock is one of example. His personal conduct and moral and ethical standards should be above reproach and his demeanor should reflect the joy he has in the Lord and the desire to do God's will in all matters of his life. The elder should be a model for the flock to emulate (1 Corinthians 11:1). The elder's example should provoke the desire in others to live a life dedicated to doing the Lord's will. He should "set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity." (1 Timothy 4:12)

We hope we have given you some food for thought as you seek the Lord's will in your life. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at www.christianquestions.net. The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,
Christian Questions Radio

