

# Appendix

## Some useful practical points

### The fundamentals

Readers from certain church backgrounds may have been puzzled about some of the terms used in this book, such as 'born again' and 'baptised in the Holy Spirit'. These are basic to biblical Christianity and it has been taken for granted that they have been understood and, hopefully, experienced.

If you are puzzled and wish to know more, I recommend *Belonging* by David Matthew (Harvestime). Subtitled *Local church membership*, this little book gives a simple outline of what it means to become a Christian and become part of a live local church.

### Checking your motives

You may be tempted to leave a church for dubious motives. Check that none of the following is true of you:

- you are basically a wanderer and fancy another change

- you are angry because someone else was given a position of responsibility which you felt you deserved
- you have had a difference of opinion with someone in the church and find it easier to move churches than to resolve the issue in a biblical manner
- one of the leaders has confronted you over a personal fault or weakness and you are unwilling to face up to it

What, then, could be considered valid reasons for making a move? I suggest any of the following:

- the leader is not born again. The Lord doesn't place his 'sheep' under the care of 'goats'
- the Bible is not recognised as the Word of God, so robbing you of any objective standard for Christian practice
- unbelievers are accepted into membership
- baptism of believers in water is not practised
- the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit are denied as valid for today and their practice is attributed either to mere psychological factors or to demons
- sin and unrighteousness in church members are allowed to continue unchallenged by the leadership
- the church and its programme lacks a prophetic element, maintaining routines rather than moving forward consistently in the life of God
- despite your own efforts, the church is not helping you to grow and make progress in spiritual life and maturity
- there is tension, bickering, strife and party-spirit

### **Making the move**

If the time comes when you know you must leave your church, it is vital to do so with courtesy and integrity.



Don't just disappear or give a false reason for leaving. For instance, 'We feel we should transfer to such-and-such a church because their meeting-place is much nearer to our home' could be misleading. The statement about distances may be true, but is that the *real* reason for moving?

Normally, it is best to arrange to see the minister or pastor face to face and explain with complete honesty your reasons for leaving. If it is a 'shake the dust off your feet' situation, be firm yet gracious, avoiding a 'holier than thou' attitude. He may well put pressure on you to reconsider, so be absolutely clear of the way forward before you meet him.

In some circumstances a clearly-written letter would suffice, but a face-to-face statement is nearly always best.

Be sure that you have handed over in a tidy and satisfactory form any responsibilities that your leaving will require you to relinquish.

Be sure, too, that you have looked beyond the moving out to what you are moving *into*. One thing is clear: there is absolutely no biblical justification for staying unattached, or for being a wanderer who drops in on meetings at a variety of churches without putting down roots in any of them.

### **What is God saying?**

God speaks to us on this whole subject in different ways. On a general level, he gives in his Word clear principles of association, which this book has attempted to outline. He expects us to apply these principles to our own situation with spiritual common sense and act accordingly. There will be no need to seek God in prayer for further indications of his will.

Some situations, however, are less clear-cut, and this is where, in addition to applying these principles in a general way, you will need to have a clear directive from the Lord as to whether you should stay or move. This may come through a growing inner conviction as you spend time in prayer; through a clear prompting of the Holy Spirit; or through a prophetic word (but