

Don't repeat the mistake on page 847 of The Prayer Book . Here is what God really requires from the chosen people:

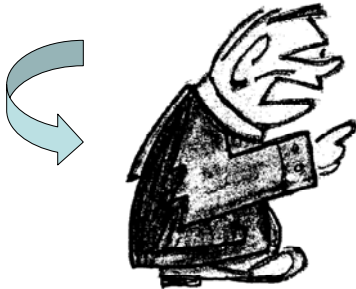
Do justice.

A series of essays in the Episcopal Church

By Canon Paul Edwards

The Rev.

**THE REV. REPRESENTS
OUR SPIRITUAL SIDE
SEEKING SPIRITUALITY.**



*SOMETIMES WE HEAR
QUESTIONS THAT
SEEM TO COME FROM
OUT OF NOWHERE.*

OUR INNER VOICES.



The Rev. Presents 20 REASONS FOR NOT LEAVING THE CHURCH: THE BASICS FOR LIVING IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

The Church is like a salad bar. There is a lot of good food out there, and you can eat what nourishes you. There is one cardinal rule: Do not spit on the food you do not like--it might be feeding someone else.

There are a lot of reasons why people stay or leave a church, but the only valid reason for leaving is personal--because one is no longer being fed by worshiping Jesus Christ in that community, and feels called to continue the journey of faith in another community.

Judging what might be nourishing someone else, or criticizing someone else's reason for either staying or leaving, violates the primary rule of the salad bar. We can move from one church to another, but remember that we are still at the same table together, where Jesus Christ is our host and our feast.

REASON # ONE

I can't stand to be around some of the people in this church! I am leaving!

Are you leaving because of biblical reasons?

Exactly, because I am a New Testament faithful disciple.



Sounds more like a New Testament faithful Pharisee.

REASON # TWO

***I can't stand some of the people
in this church. I am leaving***

***Why don't you
try loving them?***

***I can't. I want to go
to a place that loves me.***



***You want to go to a place
that loves you because
you can't love others?***

EXACTLY!

REASON #THREE

***I want to go to a church that does
exactly what the Bible says to do.***

***Do you do it by
legalism or grace?***

***What is the
difference?***

***One ties you up,
the other sets
you free.***

***Which one
sets you free?***



***You better know
before you go.***

REASON # FOUR

I am leaving because I don't agree with everyone.

Are they against you?

Not really.



What about "those not against us are for us?"

That's different.

REASON # FIVE

I am leaving. I am offended by the church.

What about, "Blessed are those who take no offence in me?"

That was Jesus Christ, not the Church.



The Church IS the Body of Christ.

That's different.

REASON # SIX

Real Christians leave the church if it is not Biblical.

Real Christians stay in the Church and reform it.

Name one!



Saints Francis, Benedict, Dominic.

That's different!

REASON # SEVEN

***I don't agree with the pastor!
I am going to find a pastor
I agree with!***

Do you have to agree with them or do they have to agree with you?

As long as they agree with me.



Learning you do not have to agree with them every time they do not agree with you saves a lot of moving .

REASON # EIGHT

I am leaving because I do not agree with what the National Church is doing!

Whose fault is that?

The pastor's, who else?

Why him?



Why not?

The old blame game.

REASON # NINE

I am leaving the Church because they are always talking about money!

How much do you give to the Church?

Nothing!



Hmmmmm, Good luck.

REASON # TEN

**God told me to
leave the church!**

**How do you
know it was God?**

**I always hear Him
when He talks to me!**



**What if He is telling
you to stay?**

**He never tells me something
I don't want to hear!**

REASON #ELEVEN

**It is the church's fault I am
leaving. They make me angry!**

**Is it about you, or is
it about the Church?**

**What is the
difference!**

**It is about you if you
are an angry person.**



**Then why are
you leaving?**

**I am a
loving person!**

REASON # TWELVE

***I am leaving the Church
because there is not one
person who is faithful!***

***What makes
you think so?***

***Because I am
faithful!***



***Some people think
they really do
know everything.***

REASON # THIRTEEN

***I am leaving because no one
visited me in the hospital!***

***Did you tell any
one you were going in?***

Certainly not!

How come?

***I didn't want to tell
anyone I was going in.***



***Than how come you are telling
everyone you are going out?***

REASON # FOURTEEN

***I am leaving for a church that doesn't
Have ANY sinners like this one!***

***There is a litmus test for
a church with no sinners.***



What is that?

***They won't
want you.***

REASON # FIFTEEN

***I am leaving the church
because you hurt my feelings!***

***Staying and learning how to
deal with hurt feelings is
easier in the long run.***

***I am taking the short
cut to another church.***



***If you keep running, the
short cut can be longer
than the long run.***

REASON # SIXTEEN

I am leaving because you were not there for me!

Everyone should be free to let every one else down at least once a year.

What does that prove?



It proves we can still have a relationship.

I never let anyone down!

REASON # SEVENTEEN

I have faithfully attended church for years, but I don't like the music they are playing now, so I am leaving!

I don't call that faith.

What do you call it?



ENTERTAINMENT!

REASON # EIGHTEEN

I am leaving because you don't make me happy!

Who is responsible for your happiness?

Everyone else but me!



The secret to happiness is to stop blaming other people.

REASON # NINETEEN

I am leaving the church because there is too much politics!

You are against political concerns?

Not as long as they are my political concerns.



What if they are Jesus concerns?

Sorry. I only listen to my concerns.

REASON # TWENTY

***I am leaving because the Church
does not make everyone happy.***

***Do you think the Church can
make everyone happy?***

***I think that is what is called
Christianity.
What do YOU think it is?***



Codependency.