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# The Visitor

*\*visiting your home each month*

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*Join us in our journey to becoming  
fully-devoted followers of Jesus!*



## Clayton's Connection

### **Church Is Hard (by Arianna Freelen)**

"I sat in a meeting. The discussion was heated. The conversation heavy. Hearts were burdened. Chests were puffed. Sorrow, pain, arrogance, curiosity, humility, fear, courage, and forgiveness sat together in a single room. As I looked around the church, I just kept thinking—Church is hard. Church is hard for the person walking through the doors, afraid of judgement. Church is hard for the pastor's family, under the microscope of an entire body. Church is hard for the prodigal soul returning home, broken and battered by the world. Church is hard for the girl who looks like she has it all together, but doesn't. Church is hard for the couple who fought the entire ride to service. Church is hard for the single mom, surrounded by couples holding hands, and seemingly perfect families. Church is hard for the widow and widower with no invitation to lunch after service. Church is hard for the teenage girl, wearing a scarlet letter, ashamed of her mistakes. Church is hard for the gays, adulterers, liars, cheats, and slanderers. Church is hard for the sinners. Church is hard for me."

"It's hard because on the outside it all looks shiny and perfect. Sunday-best in behavior and dress. However, underneath those layers, you find a body of imperfect people, carnal souls, selfish motives. But here is the beauty of church—Church isn't a building, mentality, or expectation. Church is a body. Church is a group of sinners, saved by grace, living in fellowship as saints. Church is a refuge for broken hearts and a training ground for mighty warriors. Church is a converging of confrontation and invitation. Where sin is confronted, and hearts are invited to seek restoration. Church is a lesson in faith and trust. Church is a bearer of burdens and a giver of hope. Church is a family. A family coming together, setting aside differences, forgetting past mistakes, rejoicing in the smallest of victories. Church, the body, and the circle of sinners-turned-saints, is where He resides, and if we ask, He is faithful to come." (Thanks for taking the time to read this reminder for our church, our small groups, and our ministry teams. ~Clayton)