

**ASK NOT
MATTHEW 16:24 / 1-6-19 / AM**

I. UNFORTUNATUALLY, TOO MANY PEOPLE TODAY ARE ASKING WHAT THEIR CHURCH CAN DO FOR THEM.

A. We undoubtedly live today in a “Me-First” Generation or “Self-Addicted” Generation.

1. We’re told we must seek our “best-self”, our “best life”, our “self-fulfillment”.
2. Millennials (those 22-35 years old) get the lion’s share of the blame for this self-indulgent world view.
3. However, in many respects, mankind has always looked out for #1.

B. But millennials alone, aren’t to blame for declining church attendance. Even “once-committed church attenders” are attending church less often. Why?

1. Greater affluence.
2. Greater focus on kid’s activities.
3. More travel.
4. Blended and Single Parent families.
5. Online options.
6. The cultural disappearance of guilt.

II. ALTHOUGH MANY TODAY ARE ASKING WHAT THEIR CHURCH CAN DO FOR THEM, THERE IS STILL THOSE WHO ASK WHAT CAN I DO FOR MY CHURCH? FOR CHRIST?

A. People, society and culture may change but Christ’s demands never change or go out of date—Matthew 16:24.

B. The church today doesn’t belong to any one generation.

C. The church belongs to Jesus—Matthew 16:18.

D. Yes it’s true that many churches are plateaued today. Thom Rainer is the CEO of Lifeway Christian Resources, the publishing arm of our SBC. In a recent study, here is what he has learned about churches and growth.

56% of churches are in decline today.

9% of churches are plateaued.

35% of churches are growing.

So 65% of American churches today are in decline or plateaued.

- E. Churches decline or plateau for various reasons.
1. First, plateaus are natural, everything stops growing at some point.
 2. Second, God created every organism to have a maximum limit of growth.
 3. Third, younger and newer churches grow faster than older ones.
 4. Fourth, some plateaus are uncontrollable.
 5. Fifth, some small churches are actually doing better than you think. .
 6. Sixth some plateaus are actually seasons.
 7. Seventh, plateaus don't have to be dead ends.
- F. So what does your church need from you?
1. First, wake up and realize your church is under assault from the "feel good" theology prevalent in our society today.
 2. Second, pray for our world and its self-addicted philosophy.
 3. Third, pray for your church and church leaders.
 4. Fourth, make a personal commitment to your church in your attendance, giving, and service.
 5. Fifth, don't lose heart.
 6. Sixth, expect a miracle.