

Listening as Ears of the Church

Revelation 1:19-3:21

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

1. Pretend that you are going first-century-church shopping. Which church on this list would you try out first? Why?
2. Which church would be last on your tryout list? Why?
3. Now take a cross-section look at Jesus Christ's message to these seven churches. What does Jesus reveal about himself (see vv. 2:2, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14)?
4. What is your impression of Jesus as he describes himself to these churches?
5. Read about the seven churches again. Look for all that Christ values in each church (see vv. 2:2, 6, 9, 13, 19, 24-25; 3:8, 10).

6. Again, read through the letters to these seven churches. Create a list of the criticisms that you find for each church (see vv. 2:4-5, 14-15, 20-23; 3:1-3, 15-17).

7. Place each of the seven church names on slips of paper and place them in a basket. Pair up with one other person and draw one of the church names from the basket. Assume that you are each a leader in this first-century church and that you must help your church through its future as described in the biblical text. Spend about ten minutes talking and making notes about how you might help your church prepare (as a church and as individuals) for the situation ahead. Consider sermons, programs, events, practices, study, prayer, classes, physical help, relationship building and appropriate Scripture teachings. An individual doing this study should focus on one church each day for the next week, doing an internal spiritual examination to see if you are tempted in some ways illustrated in this church.

8. Read through the seven letters one more time. Select one or more of the criticisms that might apply to today's churches. What might a similar kind of wrongdoing look like in a church today?

9. What reason for hope do you find for some of these churches?

10. Once again read through this text. This time listen with the ears of our church. What compliments in this text do you think Christ might also apply to your church?

What complaints might also apply to your church?