

# Questions to Identify Corporate Sins that Hinder the Presence of God

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Often, when we see our churches flounder, and recognize that we are not experiencing spiritual growth or church growth among our members, there is a reason. It may be time to stop and pray, asking the Lord to help us identify and recognize strongholds or corporate sin in the church that may be keeping God from answering our prayers.

***“A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work . . . . But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer.”*** (Selected Messages, Book 1, pg. 121)

We as a people have a tendency to pray, but omit the need to confess and repent from sin our in our prayer times or we pray forgiveness in generalities and vagueness not specifics. This happens most frequently when we pray in small groups and corporately in our churches and at events. Confession is usually done in private, but there are times when public confession is necessary. It will break the barriers that exist and remove spiritual stagnation in a church. Such barriers might be between members, members and the pastor, members and leadership, the pastors, conference leaders, church and community in which it is situated. We need to provide opportunities and sensitive ways in our church service and prayer times for the Holy Spirit to work on the hearts of the people in our congregations. In doing this, we need to be respectful of what happens in our prayer times with individuals, and small groups. Confidentiality in regards to any private confession of sin is a holy obligation of trust. What is heard is not to be treated as a news-story or gossip or even repeated. It is an obligation between you and the individual who may have asked for prayer regarding it to keep it between you and God.

**The following are questions to ask yourself as you try to determine any barriers** that are keeping your church from experiencing God’s presence in it. When you have identified these hindrances you can pray earnestly for God to forgive and remove them from you and the church so He can fulfill His promises for your Church.

- 1) **Does my church exhibit a critical and judgmental spirit?** Is there fighting and bickering, prejudice, desire to control, argumentative spirit, selfishness, rudeness,
- 2) **What are our sins of omission?** Is there something that God has called us to do that we are not doing? Have we been obedient when God has asked us to do something? What areas/ministries in our church our failing? Failure to work with and among the community is often the biggest sin of omission. Is our focus on ourselves? How do we spend and manage our finances?

- 3) **What are the sins in church leadership?** Is there a problem or an issue that needs to be addressed? How well are the staff and board meetings run? Is it hard to see growth and progress? Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in this very sensitive area and work with other church leaders to determine what needs to be done or addressed.
- 4) **What might be some denominational or traditional sins that are affecting your church and its spirituality and relationship issues?** Consider spiritual pride, tradition vs doctrine, relationships, diversity issues, unity vs disunity, etc.
- 5) **What are some historic sins?** Was your church developed as the result of a split church, difference of opinion or by any other default? Are there power struggles, misunderstandings or moral differences?
- 6) **Are there any specific areas of church life/relationships that seem to be under attack by the enemy?** Think of broken families, divorce, individuals leaving the church, loss of jobs, financial areas, health issues.

**Identify the main areas listed above that keep your church from being a praying, growing, loving church.**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Is there a question in one of the above areas that you feel the Holy Spirit is directing to you personally and that you might bear some responsibility for the offense?** Pray earnestly about these areas, confess where you might be responsible as an individual or leader. You represent the church. Ask God for wisdom and wise counsel as you proceed. Ask for the convicting power of the Holy Spirit to speak to anyone who might be suffering under the burden of any of the above sins, and that because of His prompting they might confess. Remember it the the Holy Spirit who transforms and changes hearts. We cannot do the work of the Holy Spirit. **We pray! God works!**

**What is your church doing to commit to unity in the Body of Christ? “*May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know you sent me*” (John 17:23).**

**Pray for the fellowship of believers in your church. Ask God to develop in you the love and devotion that is expressed in Acts 2.**

**“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe. And the Lord added to their Number” (Acts 2:42-43,47).**

**Pray Ephesians 4:1-3, for yourself and for your church as you pray for unity.**

Questions adapted from Prayer Connect Magazine