

15 Reasons I Left Church

by Rachel Held Evans

1. I left the church because I'm better at planning Bible studies than baby showers...but they only wanted me to plan baby showers.
2. I left the church because when we talked about sin, we mostly talked about sex.
3. I left the church because my questions were seen as liabilities.
4. I left the church because sometimes it felt like a cult, or a country club, and I wasn't sure which was worse.
5. I left the church because I believe the earth is 4.5 billion years old and that humans share a common ancestor with apes, which I was told was incompatible with my faith.
6. I left the church because sometimes I doubt, and church can be the worst place to doubt.
7. I left the church because I didn't want to be anyone's "project."
8. I left the church because it was often assumed that everyone in the congregation voted for Republicans.
9. I left the church because I felt like I was the only one troubled by stories of violence and misogyny and genocide found in the Bible, and I was tired of people telling me not to worry about it because "God's ways are higher than our ways."
10. I left the church because of my own selfishness and pride.
11. I left the church because I knew I would never see a woman behind the pulpit, at least not in the congregation in which I grew up.
12. I left the church because I wanted to help people in my community without feeling pressure to convert them to Christianity.
13. I left the church because I had learned more from Oprah about addressing poverty and injustice than I had learned from 25 years of Sunday school.
14. I left the church because there are days when I'm not sure I believe in God, and no one told me that "dark nights of the soul" can be part of the faith experience.
15. I left the church because one day, they put signs out in the church lawn that said "Marriage = 1 Man + 1 Woman: Vote Yes on Prop 1," and I knew the moment I saw them that I never wanted to come back.

Do any of these resonate with you? Why?
Is there any reason of your own you would add?

15 Reasons I Returned to Church

by Rachel Held Evans

1. Jesus
2. The Book of Common Prayer
3. The fact that when somebody gets sick or dies or has a baby or loses their job, it's the church ladies who are the first to show up at the front door with a casserole and a hug.
4. Anne Lamott
5. Communion
6. Connecting with other searchers who may not be part of a church, but are part of The Church (this includes many of you!).
7. The first sermon I ever heard from a woman.
8. Sucking up my pride and embracing the fact that, like it or not, I need community...and real community isn't about surrounding myself with people just like me.
9. Liturgy that reads like poetry.
10. Madeleine L'Engle
11. My parents, who, though we don't always agree on all the political or theological details, have modeled Christian compassion and grace better than anyone I know and who have supported me through every "evolution" of faith.
12. The Biologos Foundation, and especially Karl Giberson, who was the first to reach out to me and tell me that I didn't have to choose between my intellectual integrity and my faith.
13. The Mission (our church plant), which even though it failed on paper, changed my life and gave me hope for the future of the Church.
14. Friends with whom we gather each week for movies, food, conversations about God, and the occasional (slightly awkward) church visit.
15. Grace, grace, grace, grace, grace, grace, grace

Do any of these resonate with you? Why?

Is there any reason of your own you would add?