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Church Visit

I live in a small town in New Jersey where catholic churches are what mostly occupies the town. I attended a Friday night service of one of the few christian churches. I didn't feel very welcomed by the members. I was greeted at the door but that's as close to a welcome that I got. I learned a lot about the church and how it operates just by attending one service. I am used to my church and how welcoming we are of new people. Sadly that is not the experience that I had.

One of the many things that I learned about this church is that the members were very cliquish. Everyone already had their groups established so no one was really open to conversation. This hurt me because I didn't feel welcomed and I am a christian. But what if I was someone who hadn't heard of Jesus and that was my first time attending a church? Would I have been met with the same fate? Visiting this church made me appreciate mine a bit more. I live in a very diverse town, yet the church wasn't very diverse. The crowd was mostly older white couples along with younger white families. I could count the number of minorities in that sanctuary on both my hands. This is something that upset me even more because we live in a world that pushes a more progressive narrative. But I didn't feel like this church was living out that narrative.

The worship was beautiful, it was very similar to how we worship at my church. The choir sang popular worship songs and the message was great. The pastor was interactive. The church made a lot of announcements of different events that were coming up. I thought it was nice that there was some sense of community for a split second. The pastor was able to make the crowd laugh while also preaching a great message. This reminded me of my church since my pastor is usually a bit of a jokester himself. The way the pastor spoke about past events that the church held told me that the church gets plenty of volunteers. This is something that I appreciated because helping the church is always a good thing. This also told me that a lot of these members really love the church they go to and that's why they might be willing to help. I felt like a lot of the members prioritized the church considering it was pretty packed for a Friday night.

I was very surprised to enjoy the message and enjoy my time there once the service had started. I felt as if things were off to a rough start when I first got there. This also challenged me to open my heart a little bit. This is because I took not being welcomed personally and then became kind of closed off when the service started. I am glad that I did because I was able to say that my experience was pretty pleasant. I was actually worried that I wouldn't enjoy the service and that I might leave early if it was bad enough. However I am glad that I was able to stay through the entire thing and that I was wrong about my initial impression.

In closing, my visit to this church started off rocky but it ended up being a wonderful way to spend my Friday night. I really loved the message and the community everyone had. I enjoyed worship and I learned a lot about church. First, we are supposed to attend church to focus on

God, not on what other people are doing. Yes, community and friends are important but they aren't everything. God is everything and the whole point is to keep your eyes on him.