

# Is This A “Sound” Church?

Is the Airport congregation a “sound” church? Before we can accurately answer such a question, we need to know what the word “sound” means to the asker. Since I asked the question, I will explain it – Is this church “sound” according to the Bible definition of the word “sound”? This sermon will help us to determine if this congregation is scripturally “sound”...

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## BIBLICAL USAGE

The Greek word translated into English as “*sound*” means “to be healthy”, i.e., to be “sound in health” [AN EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS by W. E. Vine].

It was used to depict one who was physically healthy – “*safe and sound*” (Luke 15:25-27).

It was used to describe things that were/are spiritually healthy – “*sound doctrine*” (1 Timothy 1:5-11; 2 Timothy 4:2-4; Titus 1:7-9; 2:1); “*sound words*” (2 Timothy 1:13); “*sound speech*” (Titus 2:6-8); “*sound in faith*” (Titus 2:1-2); “*sound in the faith*” (Titus 1:13).

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## HUMAN VIEWPOINT

During the past 5 or 10 years, it seems to me that the word “sound” has been replaced by the term “conservative” in the vocabulary of some Christians. Today, when these brethren ask a question about a congregation, they are more likely to ask whether it is “conservative” rather than ask if it is “sound”.

The word “conservative” is a relative term. Suppose that Congregation A does 10 things without Bible authority, but Congregation B does only 5 things without Bible authority. Compared to Congregation A, Congregation B is “conservative”; but, is it “sound”? When did the word “conservative” become a synonym for the word “righteous”? It is possible for a local church to be “conservative” and still not be righteous – still not be “sound”!

Many “conservative” Christians tend to judge the soundness of a local church solely by what it does not do. Therefore, if a church does not have a kitchen or a “fellowship hall”, does not operate a school/business, does not provide entertainment/recreation, does not participate in sponsoring-church arrangements, does not send financial support to human institutions, etc., then that church is viewed by them as being “conservative”/“sound”.

It is true that a scripturally-sound church will not do any of those things – no Bible authority for such practices. However, neither individuals (Luke 18:9-14) nor congregations (Revelation 2:1-7) are scripturally sound [spiritually healthy] solely on the basis of what they do not do!

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## DIVINE VIEWPOINT

God's view of congregational soundness includes what a local church does as well as what it does not do (Revelation 3:7-13).

The Bible teaches that a scripturally-sound [spiritually-healthy] local church is characterized by the avoidance of lawlessness and the practice of righteousness (Psalms 34:11-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; 1 John 3:7).

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Is our goal for this church to be “conservative” or to be “righteous”? Are we [individually and collectively] trying to avoid all lawlessness and to practice all righteousness? If so, then the Airport congregation is a scripturally-sound church!

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