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When a Jewish person becomes a believer in Jesus, should they attend a church or a Messianic congregation?

This is a much debated question in the world of Jewish evangelism. For some the answer is simple - a Messianic congregation - in order for a Jewish believer to retain his sense of Jewish identity and his Jewish heritage. For others, a Messianic congregation creates nothing but a dividing wall between Jewish and Gentile believers and we should all worship together in the bonds of the love of Messiah Jesus.

I personally think the answer on either side of the issue is not so cut and dried. I attend a church on Sunday morning but I also attend a Messianic congregation every Friday night. I grow in my walk with God and strengthen my relationship with fellow believers in both settings. I believe that is possible because both places of worship are grounded in the Word of God and dedicated to reaching all people, Jew and Gentile, with the message of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection.

And that is why I believe to be the key. Is the place of worship, church or congregation, a Bible-believing and teaching place where a Jewish person can grow and become mature in their faith. I have attended churches where the power of God was not present but I have also attended Messianic congregations who were spiritually weak and depended upon the trappings of Messianic Judaism as their appeal.

Therefore, wherever a Jewish believer attends is not the issue but the lessons learned is key. What are these lessons? First, the place should be focused on the Word of God. Second, it should be a place where both Jews and Gentiles can come together to worship their Lord and Savior. Third, and this should never be forgotten, the place of worship should be one where a Jewish believer does not feel as if he must abandon his Jewishness at the front door and that is unfortunate reality in many churches today.

I probably have not answered the question but that is because there is no simple answer to this question except to say that the focus should not be on the where but the discipleship and growth learned. Two excellent but diametrically opposed books on this subject is Baruch Maoz' Judaism is Not Jewish: A Friendly Critique of the Messianic Movement and How Jewish Is Christianity?: 2 Views on the Messianic Movement edited by Stan Gundry and Louis Goldberg.