

Closed

By [L. Gail Irwin](#)

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It happened again today. I drove up to one of my favorite cafes in a nearby town and was shocked to find it closed. I don't mean closed today. I mean closed forever. But they knew me there! They knew I liked those vanilla creamers and my eggs poached hard! I sat with the engine running, hungry and caffeine-deprived, wondering where I would go for breakfast. Why didn't they warn me? I would have come by to say good-bye.

My favorite grocery store closed a few years ago, but at least they announced it ahead of time. I was so crestfallen by the announcement, I wrote a letter of thanks to the manager and a "Prayer for the Unemployed" for the employees. It was still sad, but at least I got to say good-bye in my way.

You see a lot of boarded up businesses these days. Behind those sad facades are the lives and livelihoods of people who once made those storefronts a life purpose, even a passion. I think whenever a business closes, they should have a going away party for their patrons and employees. But instead, all I ever see are those forlorn marquees with the words, "Out of business".

When my church was in its last years, I used to wonder what would happen if we closed. Would the "C & E People" show up on Christmas Eve and find the parking lot empty and the church dark? Would *that* be how they found out we ran out of money to pay the pastor?

If your church is planning a closure, give the neighbors a chance to say good-bye. Throw a party. Sure, maybe you're sad and embarrassed and heartbroken, and there's not a shred of confetti in your heart. But throw a party anyway. God brought some people together at some place to do some wonderful thing for some time. Isn't that worth celebrating?

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